

Initial Study / Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration  
and Environmental Assessment

North Fork American River Trail Project



Prepared for:  
Placer County  
Department of Facility Services



and

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



May 5, 2004



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and Environmental Assessment

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May 5, 2004

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared on behalf of Placer County Facility Services Department and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to address the environmental consequences of the proposed North Fork American River Trail Project (proposed action) in Placer County.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

### 1.1.1 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

This document is an initial study (IS) and proposed mitigated negative declaration (MND) prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code §21000 et seq., and the State CEQA Guidelines, Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15000 et seq. The purpose of this IS/MND is: (1) to determine whether implementation of the project would result in potentially significant effects to the environment, and (2) to incorporate mitigation measures into the project design, as necessary, to eliminate the project's significant or potentially significant effects or reduce them to a point where they are clearly less than significant. An IS/MND presents the environmental analysis and substantial evidence supporting its conclusions about impact significance. Substantial evidence may include expert opinion based on facts, technical studies, or reasonable assumptions based on facts. An IS/MND is not intended nor required to include the level of detail used in an environmental impact report (EIR).

### 1.1.2 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Prior to the approval of the proposed action, Reclamation must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the regulations published by the Council on Environmental Quality (Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508). This document serves as an environmental assessment (EA), prepared in accordance with NEPA and associated federal and Reclamation guidelines, including the Reclamation NEPA Handbook (Reclamation 2000). This EA provides information describing the proposed action, alternatives, and their environmental consequences. Prior to making a final decision on the proposed action, the EA is being provided to public agencies and citizens to allow for an opportunity to comment. Reclamation's intent is to prepare a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for this proposed action after public review of the EA.

## 1.2 LEAD AGENCIES AND OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines §15051, designation of a lead agency is required to ensure certification of the environmental documents that evaluate project impacts and propose mitigation, in accordance with the CEQA requirements. The lead agency under CEQA for the proposed action is Placer County. Reclamation is the lead agency under NEPA (40 CFR 1501.5), because the proposed action is proposed on land owned by Reclamation.

Under the State CEQA Guidelines, the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) would be a responsible agency for this project. DPR must approve the trail construction project because it is currently managing the Auburn State Recreation Area (SRA) under a cooperative agreement with Reclamation.

The following agencies and interested parties were consulted during preparation of technical reports and this environmental document:

- **California Department of Fish and Game.** Input was sought and received from California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Wildlife Habitat and Data Analysis Branch regarding species of concern to the State of California that may occur on or near the project site, or for which potentially suitable habitat may be found on or near the project site. CDFG is a trustee agency with jurisdiction over fish and wildlife of the State. CDFG is a trustee agency with jurisdiction over fish and wildlife of the state. CDFG is also responsible for administering the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code Sections 2050-2097), if an incidental take permit is required and the Streambed Alteration Program (Fish and Game code Section 1602).
- **Native American Interests.** Because the project site is in an area that could be of cultural significance to Native Americans, representatives from local Native American tribes were consulted prior to any field surveys and ground-disturbing activities. Representatives from the Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, and Rose Enos, an independent representative of the Maidu/Washoe, were all contacted by letter, with requests for information on sacred or sensitive resources within the project area. The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was also contacted concerning this proposed action.

### **1.3 REFERENCE MATERIALS USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

The information presented in this section is taken primarily from the North Fork American River Trail Plan (Trail Plan) and meeting minutes from the Trail Advisory Group (TAG) (Placer County 2003b). Other documents used in the preparation of this IS/MND and EA include the Placer County General Plan (Placer County 1994), Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap Community Plan (Community Plan) (Placer County 1980), and Auburn SRA Interim Resource Management Plan (IRMP) (Reclamation 1992). Additionally, field reports and analyses completed by EDAW were used in preparing this document.

### **1.4 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION**

This document is divided into the following seven sections:

**Proposed MND.** The proposed MND, which precedes the IS/EA analysis, summarizes the environmental conclusions and identifies mitigation measures that would be implemented in

conjunction with the proposed action. The MND would be signed by a representative of Placer County.

**Chapter 1 – Introduction** provides an introduction to the project, lead agencies, reference documents, regulatory information and the purpose and organization of this document.

**Chapter 2 – Purpose and Need for Proposed Action** provides a general background description of the demand for trails in the area and scoping criteria used to determine the trail alignment.

**Chapter 3 – Proposed Action and Alternatives** contains the Project Location, Background of the Project, Project Description, Description of Alternatives, and Permitting Requirements

**Chapter 4 – Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation Measures** includes Affected Environment, Thresholds of Significance (CEQA and NEPA), Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation Measures, where appropriate, to mitigate potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

**Chapter 5 – Mitigation Measures.**

**Chapter 6 – Consultation and Coordination** includes Compliance with Federal and State Laws and Executive Orders, Persons and Organizations Consulted

**Chapter 7 – References**

**Chapter 8 – Report Preparers**

## **1.5 PUBLIC SCOPING AND REVIEW PROCESS**

The Trail Plan was developed based on the recommendations provided by the TAG, a group of stakeholders joined together to develop a concept and recommendations for the proposed action. The TAG met five times monthly for meetings and twice in the field to discuss various topics and issues related to the trail design, alignment, and construction.

In addition, a public scoping meeting was held on February 19, 2004, to present the project and discuss any public comments, issues, or concerns regarding the project.

This IS/Proposed MND and EA are available for a 30-day public review period beginning on May 5, 2004, and ending on June 3, 2004. Written comments may be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on June 3, 2004 to:

Mr. Andy Fisher, Project Manager  
Placer County, Department of Facility Services  
Parks and Grounds Division  
11476 C Avenue  
Auburn, CA 95603

## 2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

The substantial growth in Placer County over the last two decades has resulted in an associated demand for recreational facilities, specifically hiking, biking, and equestrian activity along the North Fork of the American River. The number of visitors to the Auburn SRA surpasses 1 million visitors per year (Dampier, pers. comm., 2003). The expansion of the trail network in this area has emerged as a priority to accommodate county residents and visitors.

The proposed trail alignment is intended to function as a stand-alone trail with adequate parking, staging facilities, and connections to existing trails. In the future, the North Fork American River Trail could become part of a larger trail system connecting the capitals of California and Nevada: Sacramento and Carson City (Cap-to-Cap Trail). However, at this time, the Cap-to-Cap Trail is only a conceptual idea and not a plan or project.

Placer County and DPR believes that developing a trail from the confluence to Ponderosa Bridge is appropriate given the topography and other physical characteristics of the alignment, existing uses and development in this portion of the canyon, and the need for recreation opportunities in the area. DPR would not consider developing other sections of trail in the North Fork of the American River canyon above Ponderosa Bridge until the Interim Resource Management Plan (IRMP) for the Auburn SRA has been completed. It is anticipated that the GP development process would begin in 2004, and would determine if the development of trails or other facilities in the other portions of the canyon is appropriate (Placer County 2003).

The Trail Advisory Group (TAG) was formed to assist Placer County and DPR with the development of the proposed action, and more importantly the trail location and alignment. The group established a set of evaluation criteria to aid in the selection of the proper trail alignment. Using the criteria listed below, the TAG reached consensus on routing the trail on the south side of the canyon to:

- reduce visibility of trail from river/lake;
- minimize environmental impacts of trail construction, including avoidance of sensitive areas;
- promote safe grades and safe alignment;
- connect to staging areas;
- connect to existing trails;
- ensure emergency access to trail;
- reduce construction costs (use of existing trails and roads);
- minimize conflicts with private property; and
- minimized conflicts with trail users.

## **3 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

### **3.1 PROPOSED ACTION LOCATION**

The proposed action is located on the southern slope of the North Fork of the American River canyon in Placer County, approximately 40 miles northeast of Sacramento (see Exhibit 3-1). The beginning of the trail is located at the confluence of the North and Middle forks of the American River, approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of Auburn near Foresthill Road (Exhibit 3-2). The trail ends at Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 12.6 miles upstream and 5 miles west of the town of Foresthill. The first mile of the proposed trail alignment is already in place, as well as space for a parking lot near the confluence. This area would be converted to a staging area for the proposed action.

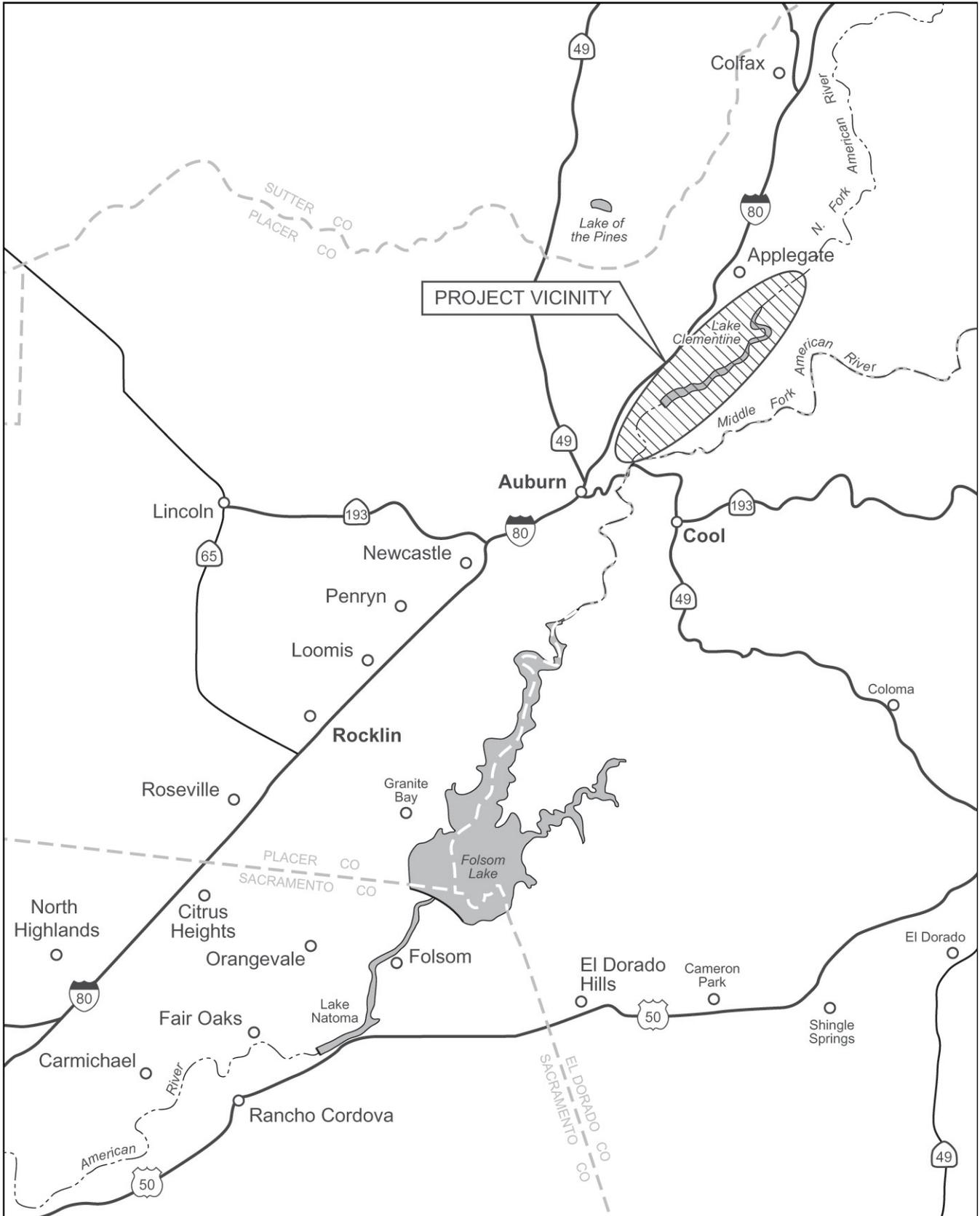
The proposed action is surrounded by the open space of the Auburn SRA in the Sierra foothills. Interstate 80 is north of the proposed trail alignment and Foresthill Road is south of the proposed action. The Auburn SRA is a natural area that offers a variety of recreational activities; the most popular activities include hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Other activities include white water rafting, kayaking, boating, swimming, fishing, camping, gold panning, and off-highway motorcycle riding.

### **3.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The Auburn SRA has an established network of trails throughout the American River Canyon that provide a variety of recreational opportunities. Placer County Department of Facility Services, in conjunction with DPR, is proposing the proposed action to augment the existing trail network. The proposed action is a multiple-use trail within the Auburn SRA that would begin at the confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and end at Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 12.6 miles upstream.

Reclamation owns the Auburn Dam and Reservoir Project Lands, otherwise known as the Auburn SRA. DPR, under a cooperative agreement funded by Reclamation, has provided interim law enforcement, recreation and resource protection services for the Auburn SRA since 1977.

Because the construction of the Auburn Dam Project has not been completed within the time period originally anticipated, Reclamation continues to hold, protect, and preserve the project lands for authorized project purposes, including ecological, recreational, and cultural benefits in a manner compatible with Public Law 89-69, 79 State. 615. Development activities, such as trail construction, may be permitted with appropriate disclaimers for the United States and would proceed only in the recognition of it being a temporary feature that may be removed or destroyed when construction of the Auburn Dam Reservoir Project continues.



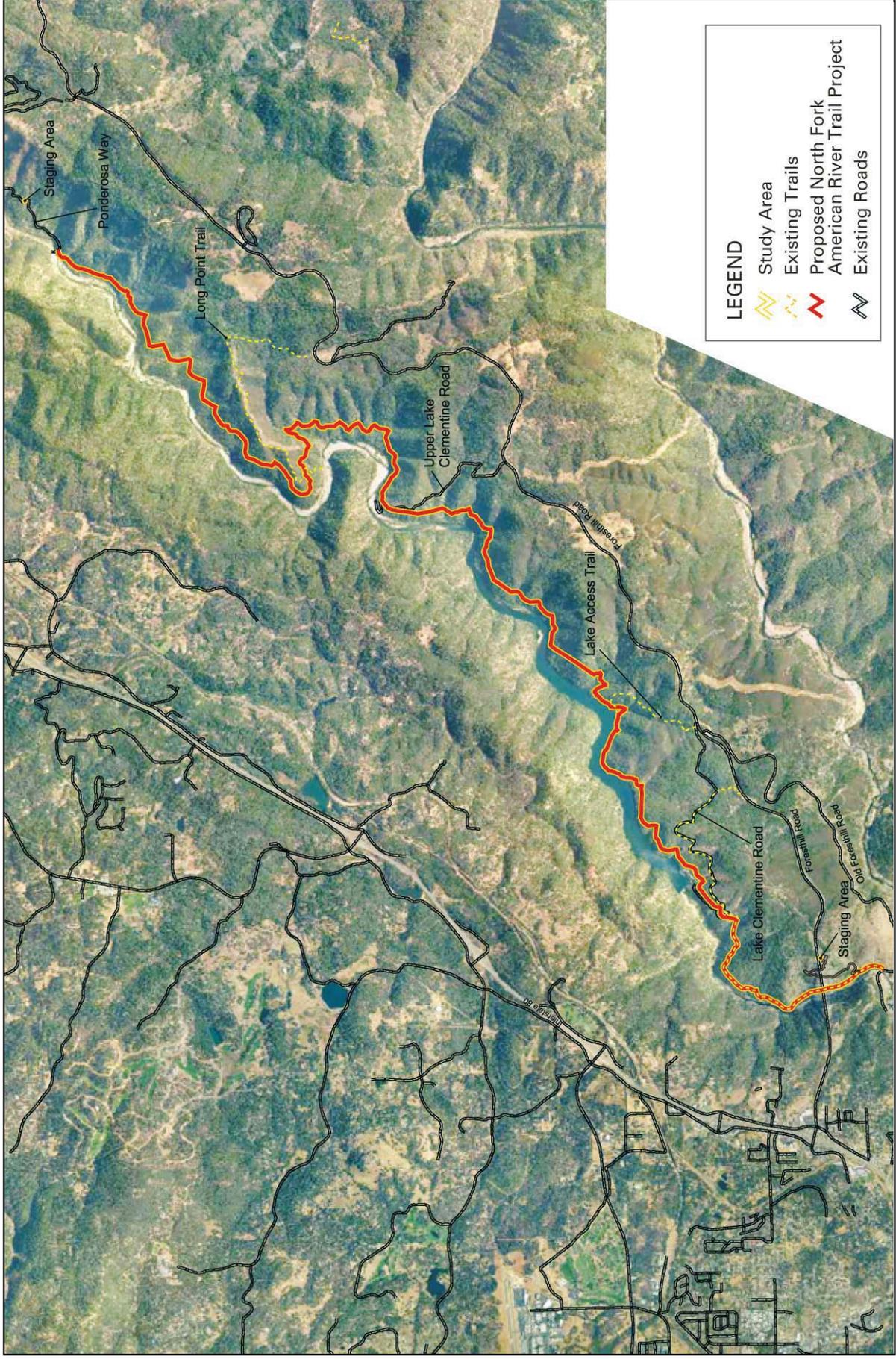
Source: California State Automobile Association, Bay and Mountain Section 1999

## Regional Location

EXHIBIT 3-1

North Fork American River Trail Project IS/MND and EA  
 P 31128.01 04/04



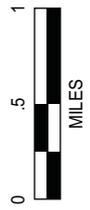


**LEGEND**

- Study Area
- - - Existing Trails
- Proposed North Fork American River Trail Project
- Existing Roads

Source: North Fork Associates 2003

### Project Location Map and Trail Alignment



### **3.3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action was devised through the development of the Trail Plan, which was prepared by North Fork Associates for Placer County Facility Services. The Trail Plan was prepared as a working document to determine the alignment of the trail, the obstacles and challenges of implementation, and guidelines for successful implementation. A group of citizens was formed to help identify a trail alignment and assist in providing citizen input related to issues and areas of controversy. The TAG consists of 12 representatives from environmental organizations, the DPR, and trail user groups (i.e., equestrian, hiker, mountain biker). The TAG met twice in the field and five times on a monthly basis to assist with the creation a multiple-use trail from the confluence to Ponderosa Bridge that would conserve the wilderness and scenic values of the land. The TAG would continue to provide input and assistance with the proposed action during the environmental review and construction phases. Volunteers from the TAG and other interest groups would also help with trail maintenance in the future.

#### **3.3.1 TRAIL ALIGNMENT**

The TAG used the following siting criteria provided in the Trail Plan to determine the location and route of the trail: (1) reduce visibility of the trail from the river/lake; (2) minimize environmental impacts of trail construction, including the avoidance of sensitive areas; (3) promote safe grades and a safe alignment; (4) connect to staging areas and existing trails; (5) ensure emergency access to the trail; (6) reduce construction costs (i.e. use of existing trails and roads); and (7) minimize conflicts with private property and trail users (Placer County 2003). The proposed alignment on the south side of the canyon meets all the criteria.

The proposed 12.6-mile trail alignment was determined by walking and scouting the entire length of the project area for the most suitable route. During these initial field surveys, the trail was staked along an alignment that avoids large rock outcrops, trees larger than 6-inch diameter at breast height (dbh), and known cultural resource sites. Wherever feasible, the trail surface has a less than 10% grade and mostly avoids trees on the high side to reduce damage to root structure during construction. Further adjustments may be made to the trail alignment, if focused surveys result in identification of sensitive resources that can be avoided.

The implementation of the proposed action would require the acquisition of permanent trail easements on 4 privately-owned parcels along the alignment. The easement acquisitions are underway with three landowners for a total of 3.36 acres of land and 7,333 feet (1.38 miles) of trail alignment. All 4 parcels are vacant with no existing structures or known hazardous materials. Placer County has entered into the acquisition process with the landowners.

#### **3.3.2 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION**

Both hand construction and mechanical construction using a trail builder are being evaluated for use in excavation of the trail tread. Vegetation clearing would be performed by hand. A crew of approximately 12 people from California Conservation Corps (CCC), licensed

contractor, volunteers and/or Placer County staff, would be used to construct much of the trail in rocky terrain and to build retaining walls, creek fiords, and bridges. A chipper attachment may be used with the trail builder to chip and broadcast vegetation that is 3 inches or less in diameter. Larger diameter vegetation would be hauled up the hill out of sight, within the project boundary.

The trail builder reduces the amount of manual labor needed for soil excavation and removal of large rocks. It has a narrow track and blade width (4–5 feet), which minimizes impacts to the natural resources. The trail builder can build and compact trail features such as grade dips, switchbacks, backslopes and outslopes.

With either construction method, the trail would be 4 feet wide to accommodate bikes and horses. To minimize the physical and visual effects of vegetation removal while promoting safe line-of-sight distances, initial vegetation clearing for the trail corridor would be 8 feet, with ability to clear up to 15 feet wide where needed to promote safe line of sight, and with a height of 10 feet to accommodate equestrian use. The proposed trail route was aligned to bypass as many trees as possible, particularly to minimize the removal of native trees greater than 6-inch dbh. During trail construction, all brush and small trees would be cut flush with the ground and limbs would be cut flush with the tree trunk. All cut vegetation would be chipped and broadcast, where feasible, or hauled out of view of the trail, within the project area. Before clearing the trail corridor, the exact alignment would be determined and would incorporate the new meandering trail design. The dips and undulations in the design would follow the natural drainage patterns to facilitate effective surface flow of water off the trail tread.

Vegetation and duff would be removed from the trail route and raked or side cast above the alignment. This material would be used after trail construction to aid in revegetation and erosion prevention. Because of the steep side slopes and the need to support equestrian traffic, the whole trail would be cut out of the hillside, and no fill would be used. This is called full bench construction. The trail width would be 4 feet with an outslope of 2–4% depending on the grade of the trail. Outsloping is the grading of the trail so the outside edge is lower than the inside, facilitating drainage off the trail, instead of flowing down the trail, which can cause erosion. As a general rule, more outslope is required with increasing grade. Five-foot-wide turnouts would be provided on steep cross slopes, generally greater than 50%, and/or where required to provide safe passing room for trail users. Turnouts would be sized to accommodate a horse and to allow trail users to pass one another (Placer County 2003b).

### **3.3.3 STREAM CROSSINGS AND DRAINAGE FEATURES**

There are 48 ephemeral streams that would be crossed along the 12.6-mile trail route. Generally, bridges and other structures would be avoided because of their high construction and maintenance costs. Natural stream crossings or fords would be implemented wherever possible. Four of those crossings would require the construction of bridges. Two key factors in bridge construction are the seasonal water levels in the drainage and the bank configuration of the stream.

Bridges would be designed with 3 stringers to support the additional weight of horses. Decking surfaces would have a minimum thickness of 4 inches and a minimum width of 60 inches with 52 inches between handrails or bull rails. When required, handrails would be 32 inches below the top of the rail, as measured from the top of the bridge decking. Handrail and post dimensions would be 6 inches by 6 inches, and mid-rail diagonal braces would not be used.

Rock-lined stream crossings would be used on the remaining creeks. Rocks would be placed in the streambed to armor the stream banks and to provide a reasonably level surface. The trail would descend and ascend from the streambed. At the creek fords, the approaching trail grade must be higher than the stream grade to prevent water from escaping the streambed and flowing down the trail. All rocks used for stream crossings would be gathered onsite.

A drain dip may be required when the volume of surface water runoff exceeds the accommodations of a normal outslope design. Drain dips are exaggerated outslopes that terminate in a shallow trough. Features such as natural contour, side slope, and trail grade would be studied closely to determine where the largest volume of water can be intercepted and diverted from the trail. Soil type, vegetative cover, and downstream slope would be considered when selecting the drain point or trough outflow location. When feasible, drain dips would be located where natural swales or drainages bisect the trail. To ensure proper function, drain dips would be maintained by removing sediment and debris, thus restoring and the trail surface's shape and outslope (Placer County 2003b).

### **3.3.4 RETAINING WALLS**

Rock retaining walls would be constructed at approximately 35 locations along the trail route. Rock retaining walls would be constructed in an aesthetically pleasing manner and would withstand extreme weather conditions and trail use. The average height for the proposed retaining walls would be approximately 4 feet; however, it would vary depending on the slope and width of drainages. To install the retaining walls, a footing that is ½ to 1 times the height of the wall with at least 1/3 of the wall below the ground would be excavated for the foundation. Rock would be placed according to the rock retaining wall construction standards presented in the Trail Plan (Placer County 2003b). Natural features, existing rocks, and bedrock would be used as anchors and keystones, where needed.

### **3.3.5 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EROSION AND SILTATION PREVENTION**

The mission of DPR is to “*Provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the State’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting the most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.*” In keeping with that mission, DPR Trail Standards have been incorporated for trail projects within the Auburn SRA. To minimize the effects of trail construction, as it relates to soil transportation and erosion, the following Trail Standards provided in the Trail Plan would be implemented during the construction phase (Placer County 2003b):

- Rake and store all vegetation and duff from trail route before excavation. Scatter on the exposed soil after trail construction to reduce erosion and assist in native plant propagation.
- As sections of the trail are completed, place stored duff and plant material on exposed soil.
- Comply with the design criteria of the Trail Plan, particularly the requirements for outslope and drain dips.
- Install silt fences or straw wattles on approaches to and from stream crossings. The silt fence would intercept soil and rocks from construction activity that may fall into the drainage.
- Side cast of excavated soil along the rest of the trail route should disperse naturally and revegetate. Use care when removing silt fences to prevent captured material from rolling into the drainage.
- Properly place rocks in stream fords to act as dissipaters and trap sediments from migrating downstream.
- Restrict construction during extreme weather conditions and avoid periods of heavy rain in the winter. Because of low soil moisture, do not move soil in the summer.

### **3.3.6 SUPERVISION/QUALITY CONTROL**

A trail coordinator/technical supervisor overseeing the project would flag the final trail route. A representative of DPR would approve the final trail alignment. Following approval, crews would attend orientation/training to safely construct the trail using DPR Trail Standards. The onsite trail coordinator would ensure that the Trail Standards are followed and would provide a source for technical advice on the construction of rock walls, stream fords, and bridges (Placer County 2003). If a trail machine is used, a grade setter would be employed to ensure excavation conforms to the dimensional requirements of the Trail Plan.

### **3.3.7 INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**

As part of the interpretive program, self-guided informational signage would be provided to inform area visitors of natural, cultural, and physical features encountered along the trail route. Although trail use alone lends itself to an active recreation experience, this can be enhanced with the education of trail users on the more subtle features of the canyon environment (Placer County 2003). DPR and Reclamation would be consulted regarding the content and design of interpretive materials and facilities. The final interpretive program would be reviewed and approved by DPR and Reclamation before implementation.

### **3.3.8 SIGNS, FENCES, AND GATES**

Signage would be limited to minimize negative aesthetic effects to the trail and its users. The trail is designed to be barrier free, but a motorized-vehicle deterrent is required on the trail.

Commonly, this issue is addressed by the installation of walk-throughs or stiles at the trail entrance and intersections with roads. Large rocks would be placed adjacent to the walkthroughs to discourage use by motor vehicles. A 6-foot cyclone fence is proposed around the perimeter of the Foresthill Bridge Staging Area. This fence would be included to assist in corralling runaway horses and preventing the animals from running into traffic (Placer County 2003b).

### **3.3.9 STAGING AREAS AND ACCESS**

A staging area would be constructed at each end of the trail. Hikers and mountain bikers on the south end would use the existing parking at the confluence. An abandoned parking lot near the Foresthill Bridge would be converted to an equestrian staging area. The entrance to the equestrian staging area along Foresthill Road would conform to the design standards of Placer County Department of Public Works. The equestrian staging area would be enclosed with a 6-foot cyclone fence with either black or green vinyl coating, and a new gate would be installed. DPR Trail Standards require either a gravel or dirt surface for equestrian facilities. As the chip seal surface continues to deteriorate, the parking lot would eventually conform to those standards.

An informational kiosk would be installed at the Foresthill Bridge equestrian staging area to provide information on the trail, a trail map, emergency phone numbers, and phone numbers to report incidents of trail conflicts and hazards. Kiosk design and posted information would be reviewed and approved by DPR. Hitching posts, and an accessible portable restroom would also be installed at this location. An old construction road would be rehabilitated to provide access to Segment 5 of the North Fork American River Trail (see Construction section below). No source of running or potable water would be available at this location.

An additional multiple-use staging area would be constructed on Ponderosa Way, approximately 400 yards east of the bridge on the south side of the canyon. The area would be constructed by cut and fill of a road bank and a ledge below the roadway. Some trees and vegetation would be removed before grading. After final grading, the staging area would be approximately 150 feet long and 100 feet wide. A surface of ¾-inch road base would be spread on the surface. Hitching posts, an accessible portable restroom, and an informational kiosk that would provide information on the trail would be installed, a trail map, emergency phone numbers, and phone numbers to report incidents of trail conflicts and hazards. There is no source of running or potable water at this location.

In addition to the two formal staging areas, there are additional areas that can provide equestrian access to the North Fork American River Trail along the Foresthill Road. One alternative access is a parking area on Lake Clementine Road, near the intersection of Foresthill Road. A second access point is from the paved parking lot at the entrance to Upper Lake Clementine, which is a dirt road that runs down to Upper Lake Clementine where the North Fork American River Trail intersects the road. The road would only be open to equestrian use between November and May because of the high volume vehicle traffic during

the summer. Walk-throughs would be installed where the trail intersects the road to restrict unauthorized access to the trail.

There are three multiple use trails within the Auburn State Recreation Area that would link to the proposed North Fork American River Trail: Clementine Loop Trail, Lake Access Trail, and Long Point Fuel Break Trail. Although the Long Point Fuel Break Trail is designated a multiple-use trail, because of its alignment crossing private property, it is essentially a hiking trail. No changes to the nearby trail designations are proposed as part of the proposed action. In addition, five existing roads could provide emergency access to the North Fork American River Trail: Old Foresthill Road at the confluence, Lake Clementine Road, Lake Access Trail, Upper Lake Clementine Road, and Long Point Fuel Break Road (Placer County 2003b).

### **3.3.10 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE**

The North Fork American River Trail has been divided into 5 segments. Although originally designed to facilitate construction and funding, the segments would be constructed in accordance with environmental constraints. The trail segments as presented in the Trail Plan are as follows (Placer County 2003b):

- Segment 1–Ponderosa Bridge to Long Point Trail (approximately 16,483 feet),
- Segment 2–Long Point Trail to Upper Lake Clementine Road (approximately 12,004 feet),
- Segment 3–Upper Lake Clementine Road to Lake Access Trail (approximately 16,872 feet),
- Segment 4–Lake Access Trail to Lake Clementine Road (approximately 12,261 feet), and
- Segment 5–Lake Clementine Road to Confluence (approximately 9,277 feet).

Hand construction of all segments would require an estimated 164 weeks (conducted over 3 years), assuming a 12-person crew that works 7-hour days. Multiple crews could be used to reduce the estimated time to completion. If the trail is constructed using mechanized equipment, the timeframe to complete the trail would be reduced by half (approximately 82 weeks over 1.5 years) (Wells, pers. comm., 2004). Because of the climate of the project area, several tasks need to be scheduled with consideration of the weather. Generally, construction on stream crossings (rock armored fords) should be avoided from November to May, or later if water is present in the stream channel. Clearing can be scheduled in the non-breeding season (September to March) to the extent feasible. Trail construction would be conducted keeping in mind soil moisture conditions as it relates to stability and compaction, climatic and seasonal conditions, and foot traffic in inclement weather. Bridges can be built during the dry periods. Limiting factors to bridge construction include the ability to safely deliver materials to the work site and the stability of the stream banks or abutment locations (Placer County 2003).

Following trail construction, an approximately 6-month rest period is desirable before opening the trail to allow soil and materials to settle and compact.

Although a properly designed and constructed trail should not require annual maintenance for the first 3 years, a maintenance schedule and budget would be prepared. After 3 years of trail use from implementation, the need for ongoing maintenance can be expected (Placer County 2003b).

### **3.4 ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives to the proposed trail alignment were developed in the early stages of project development. The alternatives considered include the No Project Alternative, and several trail alignments, including the north side of the river, along the ridge, and closer to the river.

#### **3.4.1 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE**

The No Project Alternative would result in the North Fork American River Trail not being constructed. This alternative would not meet the demand for recreational facilities in Placer County, specifically hiking, biking, and equestrian trails along the North Fork of the American River.

#### **3.4.2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS**

##### **TRAIL ALIGNMENT ON NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER**

An alignment along the north side of the canyon was evaluated during the project development phase with the TAG. Because of the southern exposure to the sun, vegetation is less dense because of the increased temperature and dry soil conditions. Therefore, a trail located on the north side of the river would be more visible from the lake and river corridor. To avoid a large slide located downstream of the dam, a trail on the north side would have to be routed half way up the slope of the canyon and through private property. Private property owners on the north side of the canyon are opposed to the trail because of fire danger.

In addition to these constraints, known historic structures would have to be avoided in determining the trail alignment. Also, there are no available connections to existing trails, the proposed staging areas would be inconveniently located on the opposite bank of the river, and the only emergency access would be provided at Boole Road (TAG 2003).

##### **ALTERNATIVE TRAIL WIDTHS**

Alternative trail widths were considered in TAG meetings and trail development discussions. A trail wider than 4 feet was considered to accommodate equestrian users and multiple uses. A wider trail alternative was eliminated because of the increased cost of construction and maintenance and an increased footprint causing more ground disturbance, soil removal, and erosion potential. A width narrower than 4 feet was also considered; however, it was eliminated because of conflict between trail users and trail user safety given the terrain and proposed multiple-use designation.

## **LINK TO EXISTING TRAILS**

An alternative was considered to build a new trail that was shorter and linked to existing trails. Steeper grades would be necessary to connect to existing trails and would promote erosion and would limit users who are able to traverse the trail. This alternative was thought to have potential user group conflicts arising from long stretches of trail that lose elevation. In addition, downhill trails are challenging for resource management, maintenance, and safety issues because of the logistics of moving people and equipment out to areas in need. There was also concern that proposed new trail would increase the use of the Foresthill Divide Loop Trail, which is already experiencing high use levels and would not be sufficient to accommodate an increase in demand.

## **TRAIL ALIGNMENT CLOSER TO RIVER**

A trail alignment located closer to the river was considered early in the project development process; however, it was abandoned because of increased visibility from river, potential user conflicts with water-recreation users, and potential degradation to wetlands, sensitive habitat, and water quality. The proposed trail alignment was placed higher in the canyon to avoid these concerns.

## **3.5 PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS**

This section provides a discussion of the state and federal permits anticipated to be required for the construction of the proposed trail alignment.

### **3.5.1 U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

It is anticipated that fill would be placed in jurisdictional Waters of the U.S.; therefore, a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would be required. A Nationwide Permit 42 for Recreational Facilities or a Nationwide Permit 14 for Linear Transportation Projects may be applied for to obtain authorization under the Clean Water Act for dredge and/or fill activities related to the construction of the trail, specifically the stream crossings and bridge installations. If the total amount of discharge exceeds 0.5 acre or 300 linear feet of the streams, an Individual Permit would be required.

### **3.5.2 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

If the project has the potential to affect federally listed threatened or endangered species, Section 7 consultation would be required under the Endangered Species Act. Based on the biological investigation performed for this environmental document, it is unlikely that this project will affect federally listed species.

### **3.5.3 REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD**

The project may have the potential to degrade water quality of Waters of the U.S.; therefore, a Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) would be required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

It is anticipated that the project construction area would exceed one acre in size; therefore, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit would be required by the RWQCB on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### **3.5.4 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

It is anticipated that the project would affect streams and/or adjacent riparian habitat; therefore, a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) would be required pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code.

If the project has the potential to affect a state-listed special status-species, consultation under the California Endangered Species Act would be required. For direct or indirect impacts to state-listed species, an Incidental Take Permit would be required under Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code. If the state-listed species is also federally listed, a Consistency Determination would be required under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code.

### **3.5.5 PLACER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

An encroachment permit from the Placer County Department of Public Works would be required for the staging areas located adjacent to County roads.

## **4 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

This chapter of the document contains the environmental analysis of topics based on the Placer County CEQA Initial Study Environmental Checklist (Appendix A) and the Reclamation NEPA Handbook. Affected environment, environmental consequences, and mitigation measures, if needed, are presented for the issue areas.

### **4.1 LAND USE AND PLANNING**

This section provides a written discussion of the existing land uses and planning documents that pertain to the project area and any adverse effects to land use caused by the project.

#### **4.1.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed trail alignment is located in the Auburn SRA in Placer County on land owned by the Reclamation and managed by DPR under a Memorandum of Understanding. The proposed action must comply with and be consistent with a number of federal, state, and local plans, including the Auburn SRA IRMP, Placer County General Plan, Weimar-Applegate-Clipper Gap Community Plan (Community Plan), Placer County Draft Trails Master Plan.

A General Plan for the Auburn SRA was developed in 1978 and designed to manage the area after the completion of the Auburn Dam. A series of events have led to the indefinite postponement of the Auburn Dam construction; therefore, the Auburn SRA IRMP was developed to guide the use, development, and management of the Auburn SRA during the interim management period. The IRMP provides planning goals and an implementation plan with specific constraints and limitations. The IRMP is currently under revisions that are anticipated to be finalized in 2005.

The Placer County General Plan general designation for the project area is Resource Protection and the surrounding general designations include Agriculture, Rural Residential, and Urban. The General Plan also contains goals and policies that would apply to the project (Placer County 1994).

The Community Plan, currently under revision, identifies the project site land use designation as Water (Placer County 1980). The Community Plan provides goals and policies guiding future development patterns to focus on preserving and enhancing the rural character of the area. Limitations are placed on commercial and industrial growth, directing development to less environmentally sensitive areas (Reclamation 1992). Placer County Zoning for the project includes Water Influence (W), Water Influence with a Mineral Reserve combining district (W-MR), and Farm with Building Site (20 acre minimum) and Mineral Reserve combining districts (F-BX-MR 20 acre min) (Placer County 2004).

The North Fork American River Trail is consistent with the Placer County Draft Trails Master Plan. The Master Plan contains policies, including Trail Planning Policies, Trail Construction Guidelines, Trail Maintenance Policies, and Trail Management, which also include applicable County General Plan policies (Placer County 2002).

#### **4.1.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist, the proposed action would have a significant effect on land use if it would:

- conflict with general plan/community plan/specific plan designations or zoning, or policies contained within such plans;
- conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the project;
- be incompatible with existing land uses in the vicinity;
- affect agricultural and timber resources or operations (e.g. impacts to soils or farmlands and timber harvest plans, or impacts from incompatible land uses);
- disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community); or
- result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area.

#### **4.1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The proposed action is consistent with the Placer County General Plan, Community Plan, County zoning, the Auburn SRA IRMP and Placer County Draft Trails Master Plan. Except for gold dredging, the North Fork of the American River has been reserved for passive recreation. Few facilities are proposed in the IRMP and it is intended to retain a wild and primitive character (Placer County 1992). Although the Auburn SRA IRMP identifies a hiking-only trail for the proposed alignment, it is not in conflict with the plan to provide a multiple-use trail. The IRMP states that the trails within The Auburn SRA are not necessarily limited to those proposed in the IRMP (Reclamation 1992).

The project would not divide an established community, nor would it affect agricultural and timber resources or operations because it is located on undeveloped land within the Auburn SRA and is surrounded by open space. Because the project is located within the Auburn SRA, which is an area for recreational activities, including multiple-use trails, the project would not result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use.

There is no Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) currently in effect for the project site. The project would therefore not conflict with any such plan. The North Fork American River is a federally and state designated wild and

scenic river; however the reach designated as such ends 1,000 feet upstream of the Colfax-Iowa Hill Bridge, which is not within the project area (Friends of the River 2004).

The proposed action would be in compliance with the land use plans applicable to the project site. The project would not result in a conflict with existing or surrounding land uses, nor would it divide a community or negatively affect agriculture or timber resources. Therefore, the project would have a **less-than-significant** effect on the existing land use and planning issues.

## **4.2 POPULATION, HOUSING, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

This section addressed the proposed action's potential effects to population, housing, socio-economics and environmental justice.

### **4.2.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

Placer County's population was estimated at 268,512 in 2001 with an 8.1% population growth rate from 2000. The majority of the county's population (88.6%) is white or Caucasian. Minorities of African American, Asian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic ethnicity comprise the remaining 11.4% of the county's population (U.S. Census Bureau 2004). The population of Placer County and surrounding areas is increasing and along with it an increase in demand for recreational opportunities, especially multiple-use trails (Placer County 2003b). The proposed trail alignment is located within the Auburn SRA, which has very limited development and no residential or commercial infrastructure.

### **4.2.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The following criteria, included in the Placer County CEQA Checklist, were used to determine the significance of potential effects of the proposed action. The proposed action would result in significant effects to population, housing, socio-economic and environmental justice if it would:

- cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections,
- induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g. through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure),
- displace existing housing, especially affordable housing, or
- disrupt or divide an established low-income or minority community.

### **4.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The project would not involve the construction of new homes or businesses or the extension of roads or infrastructure. The project site is located on undeveloped land, and would therefore not involve the displacement of any existing housing, including affordable housing nor would

the project result in the disruption or division of an established community, including low-income or minority communities. If the project is constructed by hand, the California Conservation Corps (CCC) will be conducting the manual labor. Mechanized construction would employ fewer workers than hand construction, but either option would not significantly affect the local work force. Implementation of the proposed action would result in **no effect** on population, housing, socio-economic or environmental justice.

### **4.3 GEOLOGIC PROBLEMS**

This section provides the existing geologic conditions for the project site, thresholds of significance to identify potentially significant effects, and mitigation if needed to reduce effects to geologic resources.

#### **4.3.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed action site is located in the North Fork American River Canyon, which has very steep slopes ranging up to 70%. The predominant soil types at the project site are Auburn-Sobrante and Mariposa-Josephine-Sites complexes. Auburn-Sobrante is shallow to moderately deep and well-drained. Surface soil layers are relatively shallow, where the metamorphic bedrock is found at approximately 12–40 inches. Mariposa-Josephine-Sites soils are undulating to steep, well drained soils that are shallow to deep with metamorphic bedrock at 40–60 inches (SCS 1980).

The proposed action site is not located in an area where earthquake faults and fault zones have been mapped in accordance with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (California Geological Survey 2004).

#### **4.3.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The following criteria, included in the Placer County CEQA Checklist, were used to determine the significance of potential impacts to the proposed action regarding geology and soils. A project would be considered to have a significant effect on the environment if it would cause:

- unstable earth conditions or changes in geologic substructure;
- significant disruptions, displacements, compaction or overcrowding of the soil;
- substantial change in topography or ground surface relief features;
- disruption covering or modifications of any unique geologic or physical feature;
- any significant increase in wind or water erosion of soils either on or off the site;
- changes in deposition or erosion or changes in siltation which may modify the channel of a river, stream, or lake; or

- exposure of people or property to geologic and geomorphological (i.e., avalanches) hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, ground failure or similar hazards.

### **4.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

For either hand or mechanized construction, vegetation and duff removed from the trail route would be side cast and used after the trail is constructed to aid in revegetation and erosion prevention. Outslopes, which facilitate sheet drainage of water off the trail, would be incorporated into the trail design (Placer County 2003). Prior to the onset of construction, Placer County would submit a Notice of Intent to the Central Valley RWQCB for coverage under the general construction NPDES permit to further aid in erosion control measures.

The proposed alignment is not located within an Earthquake Fault Zone identified on an Alquist-Priolo Map (CGS 2004). No structures for human occupancy, as defined in Section 3601 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), would be placed across any fault trace identified by the CDMG fault evaluation report, or within 50 feet of such a trace. Structures would be limited to small bridges over streams and be designed in accordance with the DPR Trails Handbook and the Trail Plan. If applicable, they would be designed to withstand seismic hazards in conformance with the State of California Uniform Building Code. Implementation of these measures into the design process would reduce the impact from seismic hazards to **less than significant**.

Earthquake-related liquefaction or landslides are moderately likely to occur in the project area because of the steep topography; however, the soils area relatively shallow. The soil has a low to moderate shrink-swell potential and is therefore not considered too expansive (SCS 1980). Therefore, the project would have no impact with regard to earth-quake related liquefaction or landslides.

The proposed action would not result in seismic- or earthquake- related effects. Activities would result in minor alterations to surface topography and soil disturbance thereby increasing the potential for soil erosion. However, the project would be constructed in accordance with an NPDES permit and standard conditions and specifications to minimize erosion and loss of topsoil. Therefore, geology, soils, and geologic hazard effects as a result of the project would be **less than significant**.

## **4.4 WATER QUALITY**

### **4.4.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The trail alignment is located along the canyon of the North Fork of the American River. The topography is steep with north facing slopes and numerous drainages that cross the trail and lead down to the river. A total of 48 drainages occur along the alignment. All of the drainages are characterized by a distinct bed and bank and eventually flow into the North Fork of the American River and Lake Clementine. The majority of the drainages in the study area are ephemeral drainages, which flow for brief periods of time in response to a single rain event. A

few drainages in the study area can be characterized as intermittent drainages (Wells, pers. comm., 2004). Intermittent drainages in the study area flow for extended periods of time throughout the rainy season and dry up during the late spring or early summer.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires the identification of waterbodies that do not meet, or are not expected to meet, water quality standards, or are considered impaired. The affected waterbody, and associated pollutant or stressor, is then prioritized in the 303(d) list. The Clean Water Act further requires the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for each listing. The current list, approved by the EPA, is the 2002 303(d) list. The North Fork of the American River is not listed as an impaired water body (Central Valley RWQCB 2004).

The Federal Clean Water Act, managed by the EPA, mandates state water quality programs and regulations for Waters of the U.S. In-stream quality objectives and standards are contained in the state's regional water quality control plans. The current Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River Basin (Basin Plan) was adopted in 1998, and is administered by the Central Valley RWQCB. The Basin Plan meets the requirements of the Clean Water Act for protection of surface waters and establishes water quality standards for the protection of ground water resources and their beneficial uses. In addition to the basin plans, the regional boards administer the EPA's NPDES permits required by the Clean Water Act (SWRCB 1998).

The Placer County General Plan Natural Resources Section contains policies designed to protect and enhance the natural qualities of Placer County's streams, creeks, and groundwater by requiring the maintenance of buffers along rivers and streams, the avoidance of or mitigation for removing riparian vegetation, implementing best management practices (BMP), and water supply and reservoir protection (Placer County 1994).

#### **4.4.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

According to the Placer County CEQA checklist and the Reclamation NEPA Handbook, the project would result in potentially significant effects to water quality if it would result in:

- changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff;
- exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding;
- discharge into surface waters or other alterations of surface water quality;
- changes in the amount of surface water in any water body;
- changes in currents, or the course of direction of water movements;

- change in the quantity of groundwater, either through direct additions of withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations, or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability;
- altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater;
- impacts to groundwater quality;
- substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies; or
- impacts to the watershed of important surface water resources, including but not limited to Lake Tahoe, Folsom Lake, Hell Hole, Reservoir, Rock Creek Reservoir, Sugar Pine Reservoir, French Meadows Reservoir, Combie lake, and Rollins Lake.

#### **4.4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The proposed action would include the installation and maintenance of a 12.6-mile multiple-use recreation trail. No sources of water are proposed as part of the trail alignment or staging areas; therefore, there would be no use of groundwater and no adverse effects to groundwater quantity, rate, flow, or quality in the project area. The project would comply with policies pertaining to water quality in the Placer County General Plan, Community Plan, and the Auburn SRA IRMP.

#### **IMPACT WQ-1: SOIL EROSION CONTROL MEASURES**

During construction, approximately 6.5 acres of duff and vegetation would be removed for the installation of a 12.6-mile, 4-foot-wide trail and 1.3 acres would be disturbed for construction of the two staging areas. Duff and vegetation removal exposes bare soil and causes unstable conditions where soil is easily disturbed by equipment and eroded away by rain and wind. This could affect surface water quality because of erosion and sedimentation from the project site during construction, use, and maintenance. The proposed alignment is located on steep slopes, which could result in erosion of surface soils. Runoff from the trail and staging areas could result in effects to the intermittent drainages and the North Fork of the American River. These impacts are considered potentially significant. Mitigation Measure WQ-1 would reduce the impacts to water quality to **less-than-significant** levels.

Placer County would be responsible for designing a drainage system for erosion control which incorporates the use of best management practices (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004). Erosion and stormwater control will be designed and implemented in accordance with the latest edition of erosion and sediment control guidelines for developing areas of the Sierra foothills and mountains (HSRCOD 1991). Best management practices, as described in chapter 4 of this document and developed in the trail plan, would be implemented along the trail. Due to the small size of the staging areas and the implementation of these design features, the project is not anticipated to have significant effects to water quality. Mitigation Measure WQ-1 would

ensure the effects from stormwater runoff and offsite water quality would be **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Soil Erosion Control Measures.** Before construction, Placer County would submit a Notice of Intent to the Central Valley RWQCB for coverage under the general construction NPDES permit. To comply with the NPDES, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared to address potential impacts from stormwater runoff during construction. Typical measures included in the requirements of NPDES permits and SWPPPs include revegetation and stabilization after grading by seeding and mulching the disturbed area, and implementation of best management practices (i.e., refueling in designated areas, prevention of sediment transport from graded areas, daily inspection of equipment for leaks, and disposal of excavated material away from water sources).

The project would not affect the direction or flow of water in North Fork American River or drainages along the trail. In addition, Lake Clementine is not considered an important surface water resource for drinking and/or irrigation water (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004).

Effects to water quality as a result of the proposed action would be **less than significant** with mitigation.

## **4.5 AIR QUALITY**

This section provides a discussion of the affected environment, potential effects, and mitigation measures, if needed, for air quality as it relates to the proposed action.

### **4.5.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The North Fork of the American River canyon is subject to a heavy influence from air contaminants originating in the Sacramento Metropolitan area and from agricultural activities in the Central Valley. Interstate 80 is also a significant source of contaminants (Placer County 1980).

The climate of the North Fork of the American River canyon is generally characterized by warm summers and mild winters. Average low temperature is 47.2°F. and the average high temperature is 73.5°F (USA Cities 2004). Relative humidity is generally in the moderate to low range. Precipitation is moderate to occasionally heavy in the winter; rainfalls average 35 inches per year and snowfall is rare. Winds are generally light (less than 9 mph), though they have reached high speeds in storms (Placer County 1980).

According to the General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, the proposed action would not be located within an area containing asbestos (Churchill and Hill 2000).

The proposed action is in the canyon of the North Fork of the American River. No sensitive receptors are located nearby as it is an undeveloped area designated as open space and used for recreation.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) and EPA currently focus on the following air pollutants as indicators of ambient air quality: O<sub>3</sub> (ozone), CO (carbon dioxide), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), particulate matter (PM), and lead. Because these are the most prevalent air pollutants known to be deleterious to human health and extensive health-effects criteria documents are available, they are commonly referred to as “criteria air pollutants.”

EPA has established primary and secondary national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for the following criteria air pollutants: O<sub>3</sub>, CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and lead. The primary standards protect the public health and the secondary standards protect the public welfare. In addition to the NAAQS, CARB has established California ambient air quality standards (CAAQS) for the criteria air pollutants, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particulate matter. In most cases the CAAQS are more stringent than the NAAQS.

Criteria air pollutant concentrations are measured at several monitoring stations in the MCAB. The Auburn Dewitt-108 C Avenue (3 miles to the southwest) and Roseville-North Sunrise Boulevard (16 miles to the south-southwest) stations are the closest to the proposed project site with recent and complete data for O<sub>3</sub>, CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>. In general, the ambient air quality measurements from these stations are representative of the air quality in the vicinity of the proposed project site. Table 4.5-1 summarizes the air quality data from the most recent 3 years (2001 to 2003). The state (1-hour) ozone standard was exceeded an average of 17 times per year from 2001 to 2003. The national 1-hour ozone standard was exceeded 3 times in 2002 and the 8-hour standard an average of 16 times per year from 2001 to 2003. The national PM<sub>10</sub> standard was not exceeded; however, the state standard was exceeded 4 times in 2001 and once in both 2002 and 2003. With respect to CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, neither the state nor national standards were exceeded from 2001 to 2003 at the applicable monitoring stations.

Both CARB and EPA use monitoring data to designate areas according to their attainment status for criteria air pollutants. The purpose of the designations is to identify those areas with air quality problems and thereby initiate planning efforts for improvement. The three basic designation categories are nonattainment, attainment, and unclassified. Unclassified is used in an area that cannot be classified on the basis of available information as meeting or not meeting the standards.

In addition, the California (state) designations include a subcategory of the nonattainment designation, called nonattainment-transitional. The nonattainment-transitional designation is given to nonattainment areas that are progressing and nearing attainment. With respect to the NAAQS, Placer County is currently designated as a nonattainment (severe) area for the 1-hour ozone standard (CARB 2003). In addition, Placer County is currently designated as a

nonattainment area for the state 1-hour ozone and PM<sub>10</sub> standards (CARB 2003). The county is designated as an unclassified or attainment area for the other criteria air pollutants.

<b>Table 4.5-1</b>			
<b>Summary of Annual Ambient Air Quality Data (2000-2002)</b>			
	2001	2002	2003
<b>OZONE (O<sub>3</sub>) AUBURN, DEWITT-108 C AVENUE</b>			
State Standard (1-hr avg, 0.09 ppm)			
National Standard (1-hr/8-hr. avg, 0.12/0.08 ppm)			
Maximum Concentration (1-hr/8-hr. avg, ppm)	0.118/ 0.107	0.136/ 0.115	0.123/ 0.111
Number of Days State Standard Exceeded	22	16	14
Number of Days National 1-hr/8-hr. Standard Exceeded	0/21	3/15	0/11
<b>CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) ROSEVILLE-NORTH SUNRISE BOULEVARD</b>			
State Standard (1-hr/8-hr. avg, 20/9.1 ppm)			
National Standard (1-hr/8-hr. avg, 35/9.5 ppm)			
Maximum Concentration (1-hr/8-hr. avg, ppm)	3.1/1.90	4.6/2.81	2.4/1.59
Number of Days State Standard Exceeded	0	0	0
Number of Days National 1-hr/8-hr. Standard Exceeded	0/0	0/0	0/0
<b>NITROGEN DIOXIDE (NO<sub>2</sub>) ROSEVILLE, 151 NORTH SUNRISE BOULEVARD</b>			
State Standard (1-hr avg, 0.25 ppm)			
National Standard (annual, 0.053 ppm)			
Maximum Concentration (1-hr avg, ppm)	0.086	0.075	0.083
Number of Days State Standard Exceeded	0	0	0
Annual Average (ppm)	0.015	0.016	0.014
<b>RESPIRABLE PARTICULATE MATTER (PM<sub>10</sub>) ROSEVILLE, 151 NORTH SUNRISE BOULEVARD</b>			
State Standard (24-hr. avg, 50 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )			
National Standard (24-hr. av., 150 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )			
Maximum Concentration (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	62	61	59
Number of Days State Standard Exceeded (Measured/Calculated) <sup>1</sup>	4/24	1/6.1	1/6.1
Number of Days National Standard Exceeded (Measured/Calculated) <sup>1</sup>	0/0	0/0	0/0
<b>FINE PARTICULATE MATTER (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) ) ROSEVILLE-NORTH SUNRISE BOULEVARD</b>			
No Separate State Standard			
National Standard (24-hr avg, 65 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )			

**Table 4.5-1  
Summary of Annual Ambient Air Quality Data (2000-2002)**

	2001	2002	2003
Maximum Concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )	49	53	30
Number of Days National Standard Exceeded (Measured) <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0

N/A = not available

<sup>1</sup> Measured days are those days that an actual measurement was greater than the level of the state daily standard or the national daily standard. Measurements are typically collected every 6 days. Calculated days are the estimated number of days that a measurement would have been greater than the level of the standard had measurements been collected every day. The number of days above the standard is not necessarily the number of violations of the standard for the year.

<sup>2</sup> The number of days a measurement was greater than the level of the national daily standard. Measurements are collected every day, every 3 days, or every 6 days, depending on the time of year and the site's monitoring schedule. The number of days above the standards is not directly related to the number of violations of the standard for the year.

Sources: California Air Resources Board 2004, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2004

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) established 15 air basins within the State of California for the purposes of monitoring and regulating air quality. Most air basins are further subdivided into air quality management districts (AQMD) or air pollution control districts (APCD) for the purposes of regulating air quality and enforcing air quality laws. The proposed action is located within the central portion of the Mountain Counties Air Basin (MCAB) and under the jurisdiction of the Placer County APCD.

Placer County APCD has adopted local daily emission thresholds that, if exceeded, would constitute a violation of local air quality standards.

#### **4.5.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

According to the Placer County CEQA Checklist, and Placer County APCD, a project would have a significant effect on air quality if it would:

- exceed Placer County APCD air quality standard (82 lbs per day for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, or PM<sub>10</sub>) or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation;
- expose sensitive receptors to pollutants;
- have the potential to increase localized carbon monoxide levels at nearby intersections in exceedance of adopted standards; or
- create objectionable odors.

### 4.5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

If the trail would be constructed by hand, only the staging area construction would result in temporary, small increases in the generation of exhaust emissions and fugitive dust emissions (i.e., fine particulate matter, PM<sub>10</sub>) from construction equipment and vehicles.

Hand construction is anticipated to take 164 weeks occurring over three summer seasons, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays and 8 am to 7 pm on Saturdays. Construction activities would not occur on Sundays and holidays (Placer County 2003a). Localized concentrations of uncontrolled fugitive dust emissions could potentially exceed state or federal ambient air quality standards. Actual concentrations would depend on various factors, including the location and type of activities performed, meteorological conditions, distances to nearby receptors, and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures.

The proposed action would include various construction activities, including removal of surface vegetation, grading and filling activities, vehicle travel on paved and unpaved roads, and material hauling. The proposed staging area near the confluence would require minimal improvements, including light grading and fence installation. The proposed staging area on Ponderosa Way would require extensive cut and fill, compaction, and grading. Equipment required for staging area construction would include a bull dozer, vibrating compactor, backhoe, and motor grader.

If the trail is mechanically constructed, the trail builder would be used instead of hand crews to build the trail. Some vegetation clearing would still be done by hand and mechanized equipment would also be used for the construction of the staging areas as described above. Using the trail builder would reduce the timeframe for construction of the trail by half (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004).

Assumptions were made to estimate the worst-day conditions for air quality conditions, including the use of the trail builder for mechanized construction. Appendix B provides the modeling assumptions, input, and results for the worst-day conditions. Based on the assumptions, emissions are anticipated to be 9.84 lbs/day for ROG, 73.16 lbs/day for NO<sub>x</sub>, and 34.27 lbs/day for PM<sub>10</sub>. All three criteria pollutants are in compliance with the local standards of 82 lbs/day. This is a **less-than-significant** effect.

Emissions of diesel exhaust and fuel vapors from idling trucks or vehicles may be considered objectionable odors by some individuals hiking nearby or traveling on Foresthill Road. Given that exposure by the traveling public to such odors would be intermittent and short-term in duration, potential odor impacts are considered less than significant.

Long-term project operation would not contribute to an increase in PM<sub>10</sub> levels; however, it is likely to increase emissions in the short-and long-term. The increase in long-term emissions would be related to the visitation for the trail, but would likely consist of existing trail users or a minimal net increase from existing demand. For these reasons, the change in long-term emissions would not be anticipated to interfere with projected long-term regional air quality

planning efforts. Therefore, effects to long-term air quality attributable to the proposed action would be **less than significant**.

The proposed action would result in less-than-significant short- and long-term increases in regional pollutants, and construction-generated emissions.

#### **IMPACT AQ-1: POTENTIAL FOR ASBESTOS**

According to the General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, the proposed action would not be located within an area containing asbestos (Churchill and Hill 2000). This is a large-scale reference used to identify areas statewide that are likely to contain asbestos and does not provide sufficiently precise information to eliminate the possibility of encountering asbestos. It is not confirmed that asbestos is absent from the proposed alignment; therefore, this is considered a potentially significant effect. Mitigation Measure AQ-1 would reduce this effect to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Asbestos Site Verification.** Prior to any ground disturbance for the construction of the proposed action, Placer County and the Reclamation shall perform a field verification of the presence/absence of asbestos on the project site by a qualified representative of the PCAPCD. If asbestos is found on the project site, the appropriate mitigation measures required by PCAPCD shall be adhered to prior to construction.

## **4.6 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION**

This section provides a discussion of the existing traffic and circulation, potential effects resulting from the proposed action, and mitigation measures to reduce the effects, if applicable.

### **4.6.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed trail alignment begins approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of Auburn near Foresthill Road and ends at Ponderosa Bridge, approximately 12.6 miles upstream and 5 miles west of the town of Foresthill. The North Fork of the American River and Interstate 80 are to the north of the proposed trail alignment. Foresthill Road lies to the south; it begins near Interstate 80 just outside of Auburn, crosses the North Fork of the American River over the Foresthill bridge upstream of the confluence, and continues eastward along the top of the Forest Hill Divide to the town of Foresthill.

Foresthill Road is a two-lane rural roadway. This roadway provides the principle link between Auburn and Foresthill and serves as the main route along the divide and continues easterly to Soda Springs. A recent traffic analysis conducted in 2003 for the Foresthill Community Plan Draft EIR found that Foresthill Road currently carries 6,650 average daily trips (ADT) east of the two-lane Foresthill Bridge. Although this is at the far eastern stretch of the proposed

action, it is the most recent and closely related data available. This data would indicate that Foresthill Road is operating at a Level of Service C (kdANDERSON Transportation Engineers 2003).

Foresthill Road is used for tourist travel between the Auburn area, the Tahoe National Forest and the Auburn SRA. Approximately 900,000 tourists visit the Foresthill area of the Tahoe National Forest annually. Based on information provided by Forest Service Staff for the recent traffic analysis, and accounting for such factors as carpooling and weekend vs. weekday traffic, it was estimated that tourist traffic accounts for a total of 570+ weekday trips on Foresthill Road between Auburn and Foresthill (kdANDERSON Transportation Engineers 2003).

Existing access points to the trail include the staging area at the confluence, Lake Clementine Road, Upper Lake Clementine Road, and Ponderosa Way. In 2003, the confluence had approximately 35,000 users, 11,490 of those used the Foresthill Loop Trail and parked at the confluence (Dampier, pers. comm., 2004). Ponderosa Way is a Forest Service road that extends southeasterly from the town of Weimar into the North Fork of the American River canyon where it crosses the river on a one-lane truss-type bridge.

#### **4.6.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed action would have a significant effect on traffic or circulation if it would result in:

- increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion,
- hazards to safety from design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment),
- inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses,
- insufficient parking capacity onsite or offsite,
- hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists,
- conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks), or
- rail, waterborne, or air traffic impacts.

#### **4.6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

During construction, there would be an increase in construction-related traffic from equipment and construction workers traveling to and from the site. This increase would not be substantial in relation to existing traffic load and capacity of Foresthill Road. Construction vehicles entering the road could cause some complications; however, site plans for the staging areas would include ingress and egress specifications for safety and driver awareness, including cone

placement at the entrance points. The roads on the western end of the trail (Highway 49 and Foresthill Road) are suitable for horse trailers. Ponderosa Road, at the eastern end of the project, is a rough dirt road and may pose a problem for horse trailers. DPR grades the road each spring; however, by early summer it is in poor condition (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004).

Adequate parking would be provided for visitors who are hiking or biking at the existing confluence lot and for horse trailers at the proposed equestrian staging areas. Approximately 10 spaces for trucks and horse trailers would be available at the western staging area and 3–4 spaces for trucks and trailers at the Ponderosa Way staging area.

The proposed action may attract a small number of additional users; however, the majority of users would be visitors of Auburn SRA that are currently making vehicle trips and parking at existing facilities. Additionally, the proposed action provides limited additional parking (approximately 13 spaces for horse trailers and trucks). From this information, it can be assumed that a maximum of 26 vehicle trips per day would be generated by the proposed action. This would be a 0.4% increase in trip generation. Therefore, the long term effects to traffic and transportation would be **less than significant**.

## **4.7 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **4.7.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The biological resources investigation involved the following: 1) literature review, 2) a reconnaissance-level field survey, 3) evaluation of potentially occurring special-status species and other sensitive biological resources, and 4) a preliminary delineation of jurisdictional Waters of the United States, including wetlands.

The study area for the project included the 12.6-mile-long trail alignment that consisted of the 4-foot-wide trail and an approximately 7.5-foot vegetation clearing zone on each side of the trail centerline. The trail alignment ranges from approximately 600 feet to 1,200 feet in elevation. The study area also included the two proposed staging areas and their access roads.

#### **PLANT COMMUNITIES**

Plant communities in the study area include woodland, chaparral, drainages, and seep. Each of these communities is briefly described below.

##### **Woodland**

Woodland is the dominant habitat type in the study area. Specifically, three types of woodland occur in this area: live oak woodland, mixed evergreen forest, and foothill woodland. Live oak woodland is characterized by a dense canopy of interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*) and/or canyon live oak (*Q. chrysolepis*). Common shrubs in the understory include toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Mixed evergreen forest occurs in areas with moist soils and can have greater tree species diversity. Dominant trees include live oaks,

madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and California bay-laurel (*Umbellularia californica*). Foothill woodland is characterized by a two-tiered canopy of foothill pine (*Pinus sabiniana*) and oak. Small patches of non-native grassland occur in sunny openings within the woodland. Common grass species in this plant community include soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), ripgut brome (*B. diandrus*), and hedgehog dogtail (*Cynosurus echinatus*). Common herbs include soapplant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) and California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and filaree (*Erodium* spp.). The access roads to both staging area and the existing parking lot near the confluence that will be converted to a staging area represent disturbed areas within the woodland plant community.

## **Chaparral**

Chaparral is a dense, shrub-dominated plant community that occurs on drier slopes in the Sierra Nevada foothills. In the study area, chaparral occurs along the eastern portions of the trail alignment and is dominated by chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*). Other shrub species present include manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), poison oak, and redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*).

## **Drainages**

A total of 48 drainages occur in the study area. All of the drainages are characterized by a distinct bed and bank and eventually flow into the North Fork of the American River. The majority of the drainages in the study area are ephemeral drainages that flow for brief periods of time in response to a single rain event. A few drainages in the study area can be characterized as intermittent drainages (Wells, pers. comm., 2004). Intermittent drainages in the study area flow for extended periods of time throughout the rainy season and dry up during the late spring or early summer. All drainages in the study are subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

## **Seep**

A small seep is located along the base of a slope near the confluence end of the study area. Dominant plant species in the seep include alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) and Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*). Other species that occur in this community as subdominants include slender rush (*Juncus patens*), sedge (*Carex* sp.), and red willow (*Salix laevigata*). The seep qualifies as a wetland subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

## **WILDLIFE**

Wildlife diversity is generally high in the mixed oak, foothill, and mixed evergreen woodlands. Amphibians and reptiles found in these woodlands include Pacific treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), and California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*). Common resident birds in these forests include acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), western scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), and wrentit (*Chaemaea fasciata*). Migratory species that use these forests types during summer months to

breed include ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), orange-crowned warbler (*Vermivora celata*), and black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*). Common mammals in these mixed woodlands include gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and Douglas' squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasi*).

Chaparral generally has lower wildlife diversity than most forest and woodland habitats. However, chaparral does provide habitat for many wildlife species, including some that are considered rare elsewhere. Reptiles found in chaparral include western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), western fence lizard, and southern alligator lizard (*Gerrhonotus multicarinatus*). Common birds in chaparral include California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), and California quail (*Callipepla californica*). Mammals commonly associated with chaparral include and gray fox and mule deer.

### **SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Sensitive biological resources addressed in the following sections include those that are afforded special protection through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Fish and Game Code, the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Special-status species include plants and animals that are legally protected or that are otherwise considered sensitive by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies and organizations. These include species that are state and/or federally listed as Rare, Threatened, or Endangered; those considered as candidates or proposed for listing; species identified by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as species of concern; plants considered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) to be rare, threatened, or endangered.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) (2003) was reviewed for sensitive biological resources, including sensitive habitats and special-status species, which are known to occur in the vicinity of the study area. The occurrences within the Greenwood, Auburn, and Colfax USGS 7.5 minute quadrangles were reviewed. The CNDDDB includes site-specific information on all reported occurrences of sensitive biological resources in California and is a "positive sighting" database. It provides only a record of occurrences as reported to the CNDDDB; therefore, a lack of data for species in specific areas does not indicate absence of the species in that area. A database search of the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2004) was conducted as well. In addition, a list of special-status species obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation 2004) was reviewed for potential special-status species that could occur in the study area.

### **Jurisdictional Wetlands and other Waters of the United States**

A preliminary delineation of waters of the United States including wetlands was conducted by EDAW wetland ecologists in February 2004 (EDAW 2004). The delineation documented the presence of 48 drainages and one seep subject to USACE jurisdiction in the study area. All of

these features qualify as sensitive habitats. The delineation is considered preliminary until verified by the Sacramento District of USACE.

### **Deer Migration Corridors**

Although mule deer are not considered special-status species, preserving deer migration corridors is of concern to CDFG in many foothill and mountainous regions of California currently experiencing expansion of urbanized areas. To address this concern in Placer County, CDFG has researched and mapped critical habitat and deer migration patterns. Critical habitat, as defined by CDFG, has been deemed essential to the long-term productivity of the herd. The study area does not include any areas mapped as critical or non-critical habitat for deer (Placer County Game Commission 1992). Non-critical habitat is mapped to the east of Weimer (approximately 2.5 miles from the northeast end of the trail) and critical habitat is mapped north of Foresthill (approximately 10 miles from the northeast end of the trail).

### **Special-Status Plants**

Based on CNPS Inventory and CNDDDB records, several special-status plant species have the potential to occur in the study area. These include Brandegee's clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *brandageeae*), Red Hills soaproot (*Chlorogalum grandiflorum*), Butte County fritillary (*Fritillaria eastwoodiae*), and dubious pea (*Lathyrus sulfurous* var. *argillaceus*). Each of these species is briefly discussed below.

Brandegee's clarkia is a CNPS List 1B (Rare or Endangered in California and elsewhere) species and a USFWS Species of Concern. The annual herb is a member of the primrose family (Onagraceae) and blooms from May to July. Brandagee's clarkia occurs in chaparral and woodland at elevations ranging from 295–885 meters. It often grows along roadcuts. Brandegee's clarkia is known from three locations within 5 miles of the study area (CNDDDB 2003), and the woodland and chaparral in the study area provide suitable habitat for this species.

Red Hills soaproot is a CNPS List 1B species and USFWS Species of Concern. This perennial herb in the lily family (Liliaceae) blooms from May to June. Red Hills soaproot usually grows on gabbro and serpentine soils in cismontane woodland and chaparral but has been found on other soils as well. Soaproot plants (*Chlorogalum* sp.) were observed in the project area during the reconnaissance level survey and wetland delineation, but specimens lacked key identification features necessary for positive species identification at the time of reconnaissance survey. Red Hills soaproot is known from one occurrence within 5 miles of the proposed action (CNDDDB) and could occur within the woodland or chaparral.

Butte County fritillary is a CNPS list 3 (Plants about which more information is needed – a review list) and a USFWS Species of Concern. This perennial herb in the lily family occurs in chaparral, woodland and openings in lower montane coniferous forests ranging in elevation from 50 to 1,500 meters. It occasionally occurs on serpentine substrate. Butte County fritillary

blooms from March to May. The species is known from two occurrences within 5 miles of the proposed action and the woodland and chaparral in the study area provide suitable habitat for this species.

Dubious pea is CNPS list 3 species. It does not have a state or federal status. While this species would not be considered a special-status species, its potential occurrence in the study area may be of interest for resource management purposes. Dubious pea is perennial herb in the pea family (Fabaceae) that occurs in woodland, lower montane coniferous forest and upper montane coniferous forest at elevations ranging from 150 to 350 meters. The species blooms in April. Dubious pea is known from within 5 miles of the proposed action (CNPS 2003) and the woodland in the study area provides suitable habitat for this species.

### **Special-Status Wildlife**

Several special-status wildlife species have potential occurrence in the project vicinity, based on records in the CNDDDB and regional presence of potentially suitable habitat including: valley elderberry longhorn beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), northwestern pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*), and pacific fisher (*Martes pennanti pacifica*). Each of these species is discussed briefly below.

The valley elderberry longhorn beetle is federally listed as threatened. This beetle requires elderberry shrubs for reproduction and survival and is typically associated with riparian forests and adjacent upland habitats. The beetle's range extends throughout the central valley and associated foothills to about 3,000 feet elevation. No elderberry shrubs were found within the study area; therefore, valley elderberry longhorn beetles are not expected to occur along the proposed trail alignment.

The foothill yellow-legged frog is a federal and California Species of Special Concern. Foothill yellow-legged frogs are characteristically found close to water in association with perennial streams and ephemeral creeks that retain perennial pools through the end of summer. In rivers, breeding areas are often associated with confluences of tributary streams that are predominately perennial (Seltenrich and Pool 2002). They require shallow, flowing streams with some cobble-sized substrate on which they deposit large masses of eggs. Egg laying normally follows the period of high-flow discharge associated with winter rainfall, usually between late March and early June. Eggs hatch in about 15 to 30 days depending on water temperature, and tadpoles metamorphose into juvenile frogs in 3 to 4 months. Several of the drainages that cross the study area may provide suitable breeding pools for foothill yellow-legged frogs.

California horned lizard and northwestern pond turtle are federal and California species of Special Concern. California horned lizards use a variety of upland habitats that have low-bushes for cover, openings for sunning, and loose soil for burrows. Pond turtles require still or

slow-moving water with instream emergent woody debris, rocks, or other similar features for basking sites. Pond turtle nests are typically located on unshaded upland slopes in dry substrates with clay or silt soils. Neither species is expected to occur in the study area because suitable habitat is not present.

Several raptor species that are considered California Species of Special Concern could potentially nest in trees in the study area, including osprey, sharp-shinned hawk, and Cooper's hawk. All raptors (eagles, hawks and owls) and their nests are protected by the Fish and Game Code. The Bald Eagle Protection Act provides for the protection of bald and golden eagles by prohibiting the taking, possession and commerce of these species. Other raptors that may nest in the study area include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*).

The California spotted owl is a California Species of Special Concern. California spotted owls typically nest in dense stands of mixed conifers that have large diameter trees and high canopy cover, but may also use mid-successional forests and riparian areas. In the Sierra Nevada, spotted owls may nest in conifer forests at elevations from approximately 4,500 to 7,500 feet and riparian/hardwood forests at elevations from about 1,000 to 3,500 feet (Guitierrez et al. 1992). Researchers at CDFG have no records for California spotted owls in the quadrangles that encompass the study area. Although there are records of spotted owls in quadrangles to the east at higher elevations where the forest are more moist and cool, they are not expected to nest in the study area because the woodland of the project area is likely too hot and dry (Gould, pers. comm., 2004).

Bald and golden eagles have been sighted in the project vicinity by agency personnel. Eagles may use the upland areas for foraging during migration and winter. Bald eagles may also forage for fish in Lake Clementine; however, bald or golden eagles are not known to nest in the project vicinity.

The Pacific fisher is considered a federal and California Species of Special Concern. In addition, USFWS is conducting a review to determine whether or not the fisher should be proposed for listing under ESA. The fisher has not yet been formally protected under the ESA. In California, the fisher historically ranged throughout forested lands in the Sierra Nevada. The CNDDDB reports an occurrence in 1973 in the American River Canyon near Iowa Hill (CNDDDB 2003), which is approximately 10 miles northeast of the northeast end of the proposed trail. However, fishers are believed to be extirpated throughout most of their historical range, especially in the northern and central portions of the Sierra Nevada (Zielinski et al. 1995). Currently there are only two known populations in California: one in the northwestern portion of the state and the other in the southern Sierra Nevada (USFWS 2003); therefore pacific fishers are not likely to occur in the study area.

#### **4.7.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

According to Placer County CEQA thresholds (Placer County Zoning Code, 2004a) the project would result in potentially significant impacts to biological resources if it would:

- Substantially affect a rare or endangered species;
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species;
- Substantially diminish habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants;
- Substantially affect a threatened species;
- Result in any significant activity in riparian areas or wetlands;
- Remove more than 50% of the existing vegetation;
- Result in any significant construction in a deer migration route.

### **4.7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The proposed action would have very limited effects on biological resources. The proposed action would not substantially affect any threatened or endangered species because none are expected to occur in the study area. The study area does provide suitable habitat for several special-status wildlife and these plant species, these potential impacts are addressed below. The construction and long-term use of the proposed trail would not substantially interfere within the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, nor would it substantially diminish habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants. The trail would not be constructed in an area designated as important deer habitat. Construction of the trail would have minor effects on the 48 drainages which are considered sensitive habitats. This impact is described below. Construction of the trail may require the removal of a few larger trees. This impact is addressed below. Construction and subsequent use of the trail has the potential to introduce invasive weeds to the area or result in the spread of weeds already present. This impact is addressed below. Implementation of the mitigation measures listed under each impact would reduce all potentially significant impacts to a **less-than-significant** level.

#### **IMPACT BIO-1: POTENTIAL DISTURBANCE OF FOOTHILL YELLOW-LEGGED FROG**

The foothill yellow-legged frog, which is a federal and California Species of Special Concern, may occur within the study area. Although most of the drainages that the proposed trail would cross appear too steep and flows appear too intermittent to hold water sufficiently to support breeding populations of foothill yellow-legged frogs, a few of the drainages, have terraces and small pools that may have appropriate substrate and water velocity for egg deposition and development and may hold water through the summer to support larval metamorphosis. Construction of the proposed trail across these drainages during the breeding season may affect foothill-yellow legged frogs by causing temporary release of sediments in the water or by physically disturbing egg masses, tadpoles, or larvae when working in the drainage. Removing rocks from the stream bed to build the trail retaining walls or stream crossings may also physically disturb egg masses, tadpoles, and adults if they are present.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Protection of Foothill Yellow-legged Frog:** The following measures would reduce impacts to foothill yellow-legged frogs to a less than significant level:
  - Construction of the trail across drainages and streams shall occur when the drainages are dry to the extent feasible.
  - Guidelines to protect water quality and prevent erosion, as outlined in the BMPs in the project description and in Mitigation Measure H-2, shall be implemented.
  - If water is present during construction, disturbance to pools and slow runs with cobble-sized substrate will be minimized. In particular, rocks shall not be collected from in-water environments from late March to early September to avoid disturbing foothill yellow-legged frog egg masses and tadpoles.

#### **IMPACT BIO-2: POTENTIAL DISTURBANCE OF RAPTORS AND OTHER NESTING BIRDS**

Trees and other vegetation on and adjacent to the study area provide potential nest sites for raptors and migratory birds. Raptors and migratory birds are protected by the Fish and Game Code and Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Raptors and their nests are protected under Section 3503.5 of California Fish and Game Code. The MBTA protects “any migratory bird, or any part, nest or egg of any such bird, included in the terms of conventions” with certain other countries (16 U.S. Code [USC] 703) and essentially protects all native birds. Section 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code provides for adoption of the MBTA's provisions.

Both hand and mechanical construction could result in the removal of trees greater than 6 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh). Removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh could result in loss of raptor and migratory bird nests, which would be considered a potentially significant impact. Removal of other vegetation during trail construction could result in the loss of migratory bird nests, which would also be considered a potentially significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 would reduce the potential impact to nesting raptors and other birds to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Protection of Raptors and Other Nesting Birds.** The following measures would reduce impacts to raptors and other nesting birds to a less than significant level:
  - Limit removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh to the greatest degree possible. If trees larger than 6 inches dbh must be removed, provide written documentation on the rationale for the removal.

- If removal or larger trees is required, remove tree during the non-breeding season for raptors (September to March) if possible.
- Before removal of tree during the non-breeding season, a qualified biologist shall inspect the tree for potential raptor nest, which are protected under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code. If raptor nests are present and cannot be avoided, consult with CDFG regarding appropriate measures for tree removal. If no nests are found, no further mitigation is required.
- If tree removal is required during the raptor breeding season, a qualified biologist shall conduct surveys for nesting raptors for the affected tree and appropriate buffer zone around the tree to be removed.
- If nesting raptors are present, establish appropriate buffer zone and avoid construction within the buffer until the end of the breeding season with CDFG regarding alternative appropriate protection measures. The nest tree shall not be removed.
- Woody vegetation (e.g., small trees and shrubs) shall not be removed during the nesting season for raptors and migratory birds (i.e., March to August) to the extent feasible. If woody vegetation must be removed during the nesting season, the amount and extent to be removed shall be minimized to the extent feasible.

### **IMPACT BIO-3: POTENTIAL LOSS OF SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS**

The study area provides suitable habitat for several special-status plant species. Hand or mechanized construction of the trail could potentially affect populations of special-status plant species which could result in potentially significant affects, depending on the extent of disturbance and the status of the species in the vicinity of the study area. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would reduce the potential impact to special-status plant species to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Protection of Special-Status Plants.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts on special-status plant species to a less-than-significant level:
  - Before the initiation of any ground-disturbing or vegetation-clearing activities, Placer County shall retain a qualified botanist to conduct surveys for Red Hills soaproot, Brandegees clarkia, and Butte County fritillary in the study area. If desired by Placer County, DPR and Reclamation, dubious pea may be included in the target list for the survey.
  - The botanist shall conduct surveys for these special-status plant species in all suitable habitat at the appropriate time of year when the target species would be in flower and therefore clearly identifiable (i.e. blooming period).

- Surveys shall be conducted following the DFG approved protocol for surveying for special-status plant species.
- If no special-status plants are found during focused surveys, the botanist shall document the findings in a letter report to Placer County, and no further mitigation will be required.
- If special-status plants are found, the following measures shall be implemented:
- Information on the special-status plant populations shall be recorded in the field on CNDDDB data form. These forms shall be submitted to the CNDDDB upon completion of the survey.
- If the populations can be avoided, they shall be clearly marked in the field by a qualified botanist for avoidance during trail construction activities.
- If special-status plant populations cannot be avoided, consultations with CDFG and/or USFWS may be required depending on the listing status of the species present. These consultations shall determine appropriate mitigation measures for any populations that would be affected by the implementation of the proposed action. Appropriate measures may include the creation of offsite populations through seed collection or transplanting, preservation and enhancement of existing populations, or restoration or creation of suitable habitat in sufficient quantities to compensate for the impact.
- The project applicant shall implement all mitigation measures determined necessary by the USFWS, Reclamation, CDFG, or DPR as a result of this consultation.

#### **IMPACT BIO-4: IMPACTS TO OTHER WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES**

Construction of the trail will entail the installation of stream crossings and bridges across 48 drainages crossing the trail alignment. Placement of trail material or bridge footings in the drainages would be considered a “fill” of jurisdictional waters of the United States that are subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the CWA. The possibility to fill jurisdictional Waters of the United States would be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-4 below would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Protection of Jurisdictional Waters of the United States.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional drainages to a less-than-significant level:
  - Before project implementation, Placer County shall retain a qualified wetland ecologist to conduct a delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters of the United States subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water

Act in the study area that may be affected by project implementation and submit the delineation to the USACE for verification. *(Note – a delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and other Waters of the U.S. was conducted by EDAW wetland ecologists in February 2004. It is currently undergoing review by Placer County and will be submitted to the USACE for verification in March 2004)*

- Based on the verified delineation, the project applicant shall attempt to minimize fill of other Waters of the U.S. to the greatest extent feasible.
- For those Waters of the U.S unavoidable during construction, authorization for fill of wetlands and alteration of waters of the United States shall be secured from USACE via the Section 404 permitting process prior to project implementation. The project would likely qualify for a Nationwide Permit 14 (Linear Transportation Projects)
- Any mitigation measures determined through the 404 permitting process shall be implemented by the project proponent.
- The application for a Section 404 permit from the USACE will trigger the need for Clean Water Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
- Placer County shall submit a Section 401 application package to the RWQCB prior to project implementation.
- Any mitigation measures determined through the 401 permitting process shall be implemented during project construction.

#### **IMPACT BIO-5: STREAMBED ALTERATION**

Crossing of 48 drainages along the trail alignment could result in alteration or disturbance of the streambeds. Streambeds are considered sensitive by CDFG. Alteration of streambeds would cause potentially significant effects. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-5 would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Streambed Alteration Agreement.** The following measures are designed to minimize and mitigate impacts to the bed and bank of drainages in the study area and their associated riparian habitat:
  - Prior to the initiation of any project-related activity within streambeds, Placer County shall obtain a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG. A 1602 permit would include permit conditions such as a time limit between May 1 and November 15 for completing work with a stream zone, turbidity and siltation minimization techniques, best management practices, and revegetation after

disturbance. In order to issue the agreement, CDFG will typically require a mitigation plan.

- Placer County shall comply with any conditions set forth in the streambed alteration agreement and implement any mitigation measures included in the mitigation plan.

#### **IMPACT BIO-6: POTENTIAL INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF INVASIVE WEEDS**

Construction of the trail in the relatively undisturbed plant communities in the study area and subsequent use of the trail by hikers and horses has the potential to introduce invasive weeds to the area or result in the spread of invasive weeds already present. The spread of invasive weeds could potentially diminish habitat quality for native plant and wildlife species including special-status species in the study area. It could also lead to the degradation of sensitive natural communities such as the seep and drainages. Depending on the types of weeds introduced and the extent of the populations, these effects could be potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-6 would reduce the potential impact resulting from invasive weeds to a **less-than-significant** level.

##### ■ **Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Prevention of Introduction and Spread of Invasive**

**Weeds.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts resulting from the introduction and spread of invasive weeds to a less-than-significant level:

- Develop a target-list of invasive weeds with potential to occur and be problematic in the study area. This may be done by reviewing the California Invasive Plant Council's (CalIPC's) list of invasive wildland weeds (CalIPC 1999), the California Department of Food and Agriculture's List of Invasive weeds (CDFA 2004), and by consulting knowledgeable individuals such as the BLM's resource ecologist, DPR resource ecologist, and the Placer County agricultural commissioner.
- Prior to construction, map and record the species and extent of any invasive weed infestations potentially present in the study area. This will be done as part of the special-status species plant surveys conducted in the spring of 2004 for this project or during other pre-construction activities along the trail alignment.
- If populations of invasive weeds are documented, eradicate them prior to construction, preferably before they set seed. If eradication is infeasible, clearly identify them by flagging and avoid the flagged area during construction to prevent spread.
- Ensure that any equipment used during construction is free of mud or seed bearing material prior to entering the construction area.
- Ensure that any fill soil, mulch, seeds and straw materials used during construction and implementation of BMPs is weed-free, including certified weed free material if available.

- Once the trail is constructed and open to the public, conduct periodic monitoring (at least once per year during the growing season) to ensure early detection and eradication of any invasive weed species brought in by users. Treat and eradicate any populations as soon as possible after detection, preferably before seeds set.

## **4.8 ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES**

### **4.8.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

Placer County and the Auburn SRA have not adopted energy conservation plans that would apply to the project. Placer County zoning includes Mineral Reserves (MR) as a combining district for some portions of the project site. The MR combining district designation identifies areas that may contain mineral resources and protects the opportunity for the extraction and use of those resources from other incompatible uses. Land use permits for other uses in MR combining districts require that the proposed land use will not impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations on the site (Placer County 2004). The project area is located on land owned by Reclamation, therefore no mineral extraction would be allowed without a permit from Reclamation.

### **4.8.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed action would have a significant effect to energy and mineral resources if it would:

- conflict with adopted energy conservation plans,
- use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner, or
- result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and state residents.

### **4.8.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Placer County and the Auburn SRA have not adopted energy conservation plans, nor would the project involve the misuse or overuse of energy; therefore, the project would not conflict with energy conservation plans. Construction of the project would require some material resources, most of which will be taken from the site (i.e., rocks and logs) and some lumber from other sources to build the bridges. Construction would result in vehicle trips for equipment and supplies, and commute trips by employees building the trail; however, the effects are minimal and would be temporary for construction.

The project would not result in the loss of known mineral resources as identified by the California Geological Survey or Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG 1988, CGS 2004). The project is a recreational use trail that would not involve the loss of mineral resources, nor

would it impede or interfere with the establishment or continuation of existing mineral extraction operations.

The proposed action would not result in the loss of available known mineral resources that would be of value to the region or residents of the state, and the site is not delineated as a locally important recovery site in the County General Plan, Community Plan, or the Auburn SRA IRMP. Given these findings, implementation of the proposed action would have **no effect** with regard to mineral resources.

## **4.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

This section describes the existing conditions of hazards and hazardous materials on the project site, significant effects anticipated by project implementation and mitigation, if necessary, to reduce effects.

### **4.9.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed action site is located on undeveloped land in the Auburn SRA, approximately 3 miles east of the town of Auburn in Placer County. No known sources of hazardous materials are located on the project site (EPA 2004). The North Fork American River canyon is not considered a Natural Hazard Disclosure for Fire by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) (CDF 2000); however, it is defined as an extreme fire hazard area in the Community Plan (Placer County 1980).

### **4.9.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist, a project would have a significant impact with regard to hazards and hazardous materials if it would involve:

- a risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation);
- possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;
- the creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard;
- exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards; or
- increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass or trees.

### **4.9.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Applicable laws intended to protect human health and safety include those involving hazardous materials sites or projects that would involve hazardous emissions or materials within 1/4 mile of a school; however, there are no schools within 1/4 mile of the project site—the

closest school is 3 miles west in Auburn. The project would be located on undeveloped land and no real or potential hazardous material sites exist within or near the site (EPA 2004).

The proposed action would not expose employees to working conditions that do not meet applicable health standards, nor would the project result in the exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards.

### **IMPACT H-1: FIRE HAZARD**

The project site has not been identified as a Wildland Area or a Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the California Department of Forestry on the Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire) map for Placer County (CDF 2000); however, the Community Plan does identify the area as an extreme fire hazard area (Placer 1980). Cut vegetation would be chipped and broadcast and/or widely dispersed upslope of the trail alignment to reduce the risk of wildfire. There is a potential for fire to occur during construction from equipment and post-construction by trail users including sparks from horseshoes. Due to the dry habitat in the summer and forested vegetation, this is a potentially significant fire hazard effect. Mitigation Measure H-1 would reduce effects from construction and trail use to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure H-1: Fire Prevention.** Placer County shall implement the following General Fire Prevention Requirements derived from the *Fire Prevention Plan for Industrial, Commercial, and Recreational Operations for the Auburn State Recreation Area* (Appendix C) and as provided by the Fire Captain:
  - During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, which is May 1st until the end of declared fire season, no person shall use or operate any motor, engine, boiler, stationary equipment, welding equipment, cutting torches, tarpots, or grinding devices from which a spark, fire, or flame may originate, which is located on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, without doing the following: Maintain one serviceable round point shovel with an overall length of not less than forty-six (46) inches and one backpack pump water-type fire extinguisher fully equipped and ready for use at the immediate area during the operation. (A five gallon pressurized water fire extinguisher is appropriate in lieu of the backpack water pump. This does not apply to portable powersaws, gold suction dredges and other portable tools powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine).
  - Each passenger vehicle used on operations shall be equipped with one water fire extinguisher or backpack pump in the amount of three to five gallons. Each tractor used in such operation shall be equipped with one 4ABC fire extinguisher.
  - During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, no person shall use or operate or cause to be operated in the area any portable saw, auger, drill, tamper, or other portable tool powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine on or near any forest-covered land,

brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, within 25 feet of any flammable material, without providing and maintaining at the immediate locations of use or operation of the saw or tool, for firefighting purposes one serviceable round point shovel, with an overall length of not less than 46 inches, or one serviceable 3 – 5 gallon pressurized fire extinguisher or 5 gallon back pump. The required fire tools shall at no time be farther from the point of operation of the power saw or tool than 25 feet with unrestricted access for the operator from the point of operation.

- No person shall use, operate, or allow to be used or operated, any internal combustion engine which uses hydrocarbon fuels on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land unless the engine is equipped with a spark arrester maintained in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire.
- Spark arresters affixed to the exhaust system of engines or vehicles subject to this section shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material.
- No person shall use, operate, or cause to be operated on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land any handheld portable, multiposition, internal-combustion engine, which is operated on hydrocarbon fuels, unless it is constructed and equipped and maintained for the prevention of fire.
- CDF must be contacted per the Fire Prevention Plan (Appendix C) prior to commencement of operations.
- CDF may require operations to be ceased, based on fire weather conditions, and or resource draw downs.
- At new trailheads and staging areas, where motor vehicles have access, large boulders or other type vehicle barrier, must be placed 8 feet inside the perimeter of the parking lot. The intent is to keep vehicles away from vegetation so as to keep vehicle fires from spreading into the wildland. The outside buffer between the boulders and vegetation should have gravel or other type vegetation growth inhibitor to restrict vegetation growth.

## **IMPACT H-2: POTENTIAL RELEASE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

For both hand and mechanized construction, the proposed action would involve some equipment that may require the use of small amounts of hazardous materials, including gasoline, diesel fuel, engine oil, and hydraulic fluids for construction equipment. These materials may be released in accidental spills and pose a hazard to people, animal, or plant populations in the area. This effect is considered potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure H-2 would reduce this impact to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure H-2: Storage and Handling of Hazardous Materials.** Prior the commencement of project construction, Placer County shall:
  - Prepare and implement an accidental spill prevention and response plan for storage and use of hazardous materials. This plan shall identify measures to prevent accidental spills from leaving the site and methods for responding to and cleaning up spills before neighboring properties are exposed to hazardous materials.
  - Ensure that any employee handling hazardous materials is trained in the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials and trained to follow all applicable regulations with regard to such hazardous materials.
  - Before construction begins, the construction contractor would be required to identify a staging area where hazardous materials will be stored during construction in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

## **4.10 NOISE**

This section provides a discussion of the existing noise conditions of the project site, potentially significant effects, and mitigation measures (if needed) to reduce effects to less than significant.

### **4.10.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed action site is located in the undeveloped canyon of the North Fork of the American River in Placer County, approximately 3 miles east of the City of Auburn, and more than 2 miles from the closest noise sensitive receptors. The area surrounding the project site is open space and is zoned for Water Influence with combining districts of Mineral Reserves, Farming, and Building (20 acre minimum). There is no residential zoning in the vicinity of the project (Placer County 2004a). Existing noise sources would be occasional traffic from Foresthill Road and recreational users on the lake.

The Noise Element of the Placer County General Plan includes goals, standards, and policies designed to ensure that county residents are not subjected to noise beyond acceptable levels (Placer County 1994). A new noise ordinance adopted December 2003 and effective March 9, 2004, would exempt any construction-generated noise, provided construction is conducted between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, and between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. This exemption would apply, provided that all construction equipment is fitted with factory-installed muffler devices and that all construction equipment is maintained in good working order (Placer County 2004b).

### **4.10.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria below were taken from the Placer County CEQA Checklist. The proposed action would be considered to have a significant impact on the environment with regard to noise if it would:

- increase existing noise levels and
- expose people to noise levels in excess of County standards.

#### **4.10.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Hand construction of the trail would require approximately 20 members of the California Conservation Corps., generating typical noise from human voices, walking, and the use of hand tools and chainsaws. The effects of the crews would be temporary and less than significant.

The trail may be constructed using a small Sweco trail builder or equivalent. The trail builder significantly reduces the amount of manual labor needed for excavation of soil and large rocks. The trail builder would not be used in any areas that it is incapable of excavating to the dimensional requirements of the Trail Plan. The trail builder has a narrow track and blade width, which minimizes impacts to the natural resources, but would generate noise from the diesel-powered engine. Recognizing the temporary nature of the trail construction activity and the absence of nearby sensitive noise receptors, the noise from the trail groomer would be less than significant.

Construction activities associated with the proposed staging areas would be expected to include operation of trucks, excavators, and graders. Noise levels from trucks slowing down and accelerating would be expected to be similar. The closest noise-sensitive receptors are approximately 2 miles away in Auburn. The project would comply with the noise ordinance requirements by limiting construction to between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, and all equipment would be fitted with factory-installed mufflers and be properly maintained (Placer County 2004b). Therefore, the impact from construction-related activities would be **less than significant** and no mitigation is required.

### **4.11 PUBLIC SERVICES**

This section describes the existing public services for the project area, any significant effects anticipated with the project's implementation and mitigation measures, if necessary, to reduce impacts.

#### **4.11.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The Auburn SRA is currently served by the California Highway Patrol for traffic-related services. Placer County Public Works handles road maintenance for Foresthill Road, Lake Clementine Road, and Upper Lake Clementine Road. Under an agreement with Reclamation, DPR provides rangers for law enforcement and maintains Ponderosa Way by grading each spring. The Placer County Sheriff's Department in Auburn handles all other police services; and fire and medical emergency response is provided under an agreement with Reclamation by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF).

#### **4.11.2 THRESHOLD OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed action would have a significant effect if it would have, an effect upon or result in, the need for new or altered government services in any of the following areas:

- fire protection;
- sheriff protection;
- schools;
- maintenance of public facilities, including roads; or
- other governmental services.

#### **4.11.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The proposed action would not result in the need for significant increase or new services in fire protection, sheriff protection, schools, or other public facilities, because the proposed action is a multiple-use trail with two staging areas that do not include an increased need for public services. The current public services provided to the Auburn SRA would be sufficient to handle the proposed action. Fire services required by the new trail would be the same as those required by the existing Auburn SRA. Police services would continue to be provided by the California Highway Patrol for traffic-related services, Placer County Public Works and DPR for road maintenance, and by the Placer County Sheriff's Department for all other police services. Fire and medical emergency response would be provided by CDF. Plans to ensure the continuation of emergency response services during construction would be incorporated into the final project specifications. Because the project would use existing public services and no additional services or changes to existing services would be required, the project would have **no significant effect** on public services.

### **4.12 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

This section describes the existing utilities and service systems for the project area, any significant effects anticipated by the project's implementation and mitigation measures, if necessary, to reduce impacts.

#### **4.12.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The project site is located in the North Fork of the American River canyon on undeveloped land north of Foresthill Road and approximately 3 miles east of Auburn. The site does not have existing sewage or wastewater service, electricity, telephone, solid waste collection, or water supplies.

#### 4.12.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist and the State CEQA Guidelines, the project would result in significant effects if it results in the need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:

- power or natural gas;
- communication systems;
- local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities;
- sewer, septic systems, or wastewater treatment and disposal facilities;
- stormwater drainage;
- solid waste materials recovery or disposal; or
- local or regional water supplies.

#### 4.12.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The proposed action does not have components that would require electricity, communication, wastewater treatment, sewer, septic, or water supply systems. The project would provide stormwater drainage for the staging areas. Solid waste materials would be collected and disposed of by the current solid waste collection contractor that serves the Auburn SRA (Fisher, pers. comm., 2004). Therefore, **no effects** to utilities and service systems would result from implementation of the proposed action.

### 4.13 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

This section discusses the existing aesthetic resources within the project area, any effects the project may have on those resources, and mitigation measures to reduce effects, if needed.

#### 4.13.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The proposed action is located in the Auburn SRA in the North Fork of the American River canyon, south of Interstate 80. Lake Clementine lies immediately to the north of the alignment. Undeveloped land dominated with natural vegetation lies to the east, west, and south of the project site. Foresthill Road follows a ridge south of the alignment. Vegetation consists mostly of woodland and chaparral. Views from the site are dominated by the river, mountains, and ridge lines. The nearest visually prominent land form is Robbers Roost, a large rock outcrop on the north side of the river. The southernmost portion of the trail that is already in place is visible from Highway 49 and Foresthill Road at the confluence of the North and Middle forks of the American River. Because of the steep slope of the canyon, the new portion of the trail will not be visible from surrounding viewpoints, including Lake Clementine and the north side of the canyon.

#### 4.13.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the Placer County CEQA Checklist, the proposed action would have a significant visual impact if it would:

- affect a scenic vista or scenic highway,
- have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect, or
- create adverse light or glare effects.

#### 4.13.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The proposed action would introduce new physical elements into the landscape; however, the trail is designed to avoid visually obtrusive effects. The trail width (4 feet) would minimize visibility from above or from the other side of the river. In addition, trail construction would avoid the removal of trees over 6 inches dbh, which would minimize visible canopy reduction as well as maintain the picturesque views along the alignment. Proposed Action features such as stream crossings, off-road vehicle barriers, and bridges would incorporate natural colors and materials, such as stone, rock, and wood found in the area.

Because of the low profile of the trail and steep topography of the canyon, the proposed trail alignment would not affect long-range views of scenic vistas, such as the surrounding mountains. Motorists traveling south on Foresthill Road or Highway 49 would have a view of the river and mountains that would be unobstructed by the proposed action. Interstate 80, Foresthill Road, and Highway 49 are not designated as scenic highways in the vicinity of the proposed action; therefore the trail would not negatively affect a scenic vista or scenic highway (Caltrans 2004). No lights or sources of glare are proposed as part of the project; therefore, nighttime views in the area would not be affected by light or glare. Because of the absence of scenic highways within or in view of the project area, the lack of important public vistas with views of the trail alignment, a trail location and design that reduces visibility, and the lack of proposed lights or sources of glare, the proposed action would have a **less-than-significant** effect on aesthetic resources.

### 4.14 CULTURAL RESOURCES

#### 4.14.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The North Fork of the American River is an area known to contain the traces of extensive prehistoric and historic-era land use. Although best known as an important placer mining area that played a pivotal role in the gold rush of the late 1840s and 1850s, early Native American sites can be found throughout the region as well.

In later prehistoric times and by the early historic period, archaeological and ethnographic evidence indicates the North Fork region was inhabited by Native Americans of the Nisenan (Southern Maidu) tribe. Nisenan territory encompassed a broad expanse ranging from the Sacramento River in the west to the crest of the Sierra in the east. The northern boundary is

not well defined because of linguistic similarities with neighboring groups although the Yuba River drainage appears to be where the first truly distinct Nisenan dialect was spoken (Kroeber 1925:393). Ethnographically, the southernmost extension of the Nisenan appears to have been just south of the American River in an area also occupied by the Miwok (Bennyhoff 1961).

Historically, the most intensive form of land use to occur along the North Fork involved placer mining. As access to a reliable source of water was critical to the miners, thus numerous water conveyance systems were constructed in the area. Although not located within the project area, one of the more important systems was the North Fork Ditch. This ditch system was constructed by the American River Ditch Company which was incorporated in November of 1854 (Dickerson 1925). The North Fork Ditch consisted of a series of dams, flumes, and ditches that operated in the region well into the 20th century. While transporting water to the diggings outside the immediate river canyon was common practice, by the early 1900s innovative bucket dredges operated directly within the North Fork channel. One of the more prominent operations was the Pacific Gold Dredging Company, which operated within the project area and left behind distinctive tailings piles still visible along the banks of the North Fork.

A total of nine cultural resources were documented during the archaeological inventory of the project area. Although mapping from the 1960s and 1970s surveys indicates numerous sites and features within or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed trail route, many were not encountered possibly because of mapping inaccuracies inherent in brief surveys and the lack of GIS technology at the time. Mapping for two of the newly documented resources (NF-6 and NF-7) is approximate as suitable GPS readings could not be obtained because of dense vegetation and rugged terrain. All of the recorded sites date to the historic era and many are related to placer mining and mining-related water conveyance. No prehistoric resources were encountered. Information on these resources is summarized in Table 4.14-1 and arranged in order from west (at the confluence of the North and Middle forks) to the east (at Ponderosa Bridge).

The majority of the resources identified during the EDAW cultural resource survey are related to, or likely related to, placer mining activities that were conducted along the North Fork from the middle of the 19th century until at least the early decades of the 20th century. Some of these sites and features are located in areas where the proposed trail project would not affect their integrity. These include the abutments of the Old Foresthill Road Bridge (NF-1), and the nearby cable anchors (NF-2) likely associated with the construction of the New Foresthill Road Bridge.

Resource Number	Resource Type	Location (USGS Quad)
NF-1	Old Foresthill Road Bridge abutments (1911-1955)	Auburn
NF-2	eyebolt cable anchors (probably related to the construction of the New Foresthill Bridge (c. 1972)	Auburn
NF-3	catch basin (associated with Lake Clementine marina)	Auburn
NF-4	water conveyance ditch segment	Auburn
NF-5	water conveyance ditch segment	Auburn / Greenwood
NF-6	unpaved road segment	Greenwood
NF-7	water conveyance ditch segment	Greenwood
NF-8	water conveyance ditch segment	Greenwood
NF-9	placer mine adit/excavation	Greenwood
Source: EDAW 2004		

Site NF-3, a catch basin and 2-inch diameter downhill-trending galvanized steel pipes, is associated with the site of a Lake Clementine marina caretaker's house. Although the basin itself probably dates to the 1930s or 1940s when the marina was established, it has been heavily affected by later period modifications and is not associated with an important resource.

One of the most common cultural resources noted within and in the vicinity of the trail project area are ditch segments associated with water conveyance related to 19th century and early 20th century placer mining operations. Several narrow mining ditch segments, NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8 although partially silted in, retain some integrity in terms of their position, configuration, and incorporated rock retaining walls. Although such ditches are commonplace throughout the region, further documentary and field investigations could uncover important information regarding the construction periods of these ditches, the individuals or companies involved in their placement, and the mining concerns served by their presence.

A single unpaved road grade (NF-6), probably related to mining activities along the North Fork, remains, with the exception of small sections in excellent condition. Although further research would be necessary to determine the age and function of the roadway, given the preponderance of mining features in the area, it is reasonable to assume that this site could be related to a specific mining period or an individual operation or incorporated mining concern. Although placing the trail directly along a resource (such as a mining ditch) would, in most cases, result in a significant adverse impact, establishing the trail along this road would result in a positive effect. By establishing the trail along this grade, this resource would be enhanced through ongoing programs of trail maintenance, preserving the integrity of this feature.

The easternmost resource (NF-9) documented during the EDAW inventory is a placer mine adit or excavation located at the toe of the north-facing river canyon slope near Ponderosa Bridge. The entire bar from Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet down-river was a major focus of placer mining activities. This bar, terrace, and toe of the adjoining slope exhibit numerous tailings piles, ditches, possible road grades, excavations, and other features associated with mining that may have taken place over a long period during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Additional research would be necessary to determine the periods during which mining occurred along this bar and the individuals or companies most involved in extracting placer gold from the deposits.

#### **4.14.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The significance of individual sites, features, or artifacts as per California Register of Historic Resources and National Register of Historic Places California Register of Historic Resources and National Register of Historic Places (CRHR/NRHP) guidelines is an important consideration in terms of the management of cultural resources. Each register uses similar criteria and sites eligible for CRHR listing are also potentially eligible for inclusion on the NRHP.

Determining the CRHR eligibility of historic and prehistoric sites located within the study area is guided by the specific legal context of the site's significance as outlined in §§15064.5(b), 21083.2, and 21084.1 of the Public Resources Code (PRC). NRHP eligibility is based on similar criteria outlined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470). A cultural resource may be eligible for listing on the CRHR and/or NRHP if it:

- is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California/national history and cultural heritage;
- is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of an important creative individual or possesses high artistic values; or
- has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The following criteria from the CEQA guidelines were used to determine the significance of potential impacts of the proposed trail project on cultural resources. The project would be considered to have significant effects if it:

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the CRHR;

- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) or the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirement of section 5024.1(g) of the public Resources Code, or
- Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR as determined by a lead agency for the purposes of CEQA.

#### 4.14.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

One of the most important considerations in determining the potential consequences of the proposed action on documented cultural resources is the level of significance each site or feature possesses when measured against the CRHR/NRHP criteria. Potential impacts to sites that are currently listed, or potentially eligible for listing on either register must be mitigated according to the provisions of CEQA and Section 106 of the NHPA. The eligibility potential of each documented resource within and in the vicinity of the trail route is summarized below in Table 4.14-2.

Table 4.14-2 Preliminary CRHR/NRHP Resource Eligibility		
Resource Number	Resource Type	CRHR/NRHP Eligibility
NF-1	Old Foresthill Road Bridge abutments (1911-1955)	not eligible
NF-2	eyebolt cable anchors (probably related to the construction of the New Foresthill Bridge (c. 1972)	not eligible
NF-3	catch basin (associated with Lake Clementine marina)	not eligible
NF-4	water conveyance ditch segment	not evaluated
NF-5	water conveyance ditch segment	not evaluated
NF-6	unpaved road segment	not evaluated
NF-7	water conveyance ditch segment	not evaluated
NF-8	water conveyance ditch segment	not evaluated
NF-9	placer mine adit/excavation	not evaluated
Source: EDAW 2004		

Site NF-1, while considered a cultural resource under CEQA and Section 106 guidelines, will not be affected by the proposed action as the trail is already established and stable in this location and no grading is proposed for this area. In addition, the bridge's removal has clearly compromised the integrity of this resource to a point where it would not be eligible for CRHR/NRHP listing.

While recorded for the purposes of this study, the cable anchor bolts constituting NF-2 are not considered a cultural resource under CEQA or Section 106 because of its recent age. In addition, the eye bolts have been driven into large boulders or bedrock, making it unlikely that they would be adversely affected by normal trail construction and maintenance activities.

The retention basin associated with the Lake Clementine marina appears to date to the middle decades of the 20th century (following the construction of Lake Clementine in the late 1930s). Although eligible for consideration as a cultural resource under CEQA and Section 106, it appears that neither this basin, nor the facilities it once served have any significant historical association. In addition, galvanized steel pipes and various fittings now attached to the basin appear to be of 1960s or 1970s vintage and have adversely affected any historical integrity the basin may have once possessed. Although the proposed trail would affect a portion of the later piping associated with this basin, no adverse impacts will occur because of the feature's lack of historical significance.

The mining ditch segments documented during the course of the survey (NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8), despite being silted in to varying degrees, retain degrees of integrity that could contribute their CRHR/NRHP eligibility. Further research would be necessary to determine CRHR/NRHP eligibility of these ditches; however, these resources have not been subjected to in-depth eligibility studies. As currently mapped, the proposed trail would follow the path of these ditches.

Similar to the ditch segments in terms of its location on the steep hillside and the position of the proposed trail, NF-6, an unpaved road, possesses good integrity but uncertain historical association. However, in this case, by incorporating the road grade into the trail system, the condition of this feature would be greatly enhanced through the maintenance of the grade. As such, impacts of the proposed action on this resource would be positive in nature, preserving its potential CRHR/NRHP eligibility.

The extensively mined bar designated NF-9 appears to retain considerable integrity and likely possesses some historical associations important to the North Fork American River region and past mining activities. Although the entire bar is outside the project area, some elements of the placer mining operations do extend to the toe of the slope and would be affected by the proposed trail. As numerous excavations, tailing piles, adits and possibly ditches and roads are present along the base of the slope, all such elements could be directly affected through trail construction or maintenance. Such impacts could affect the integrity of such features and reduce or destroy their potential status as contributing elements to a CRHR/NRHP eligible resource; however, Mitigation Measure CR-1 would reduce the effects to less-than-significant.

#### **IMPACT CR-1: EFFECTS TO POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Six unevaluated, although potentially significant (as per the CRHR/NRHP), cultural resources have been documented within and immediately adjacent to the proposed trail route. These include water conveyance ditches related to early mining activities, a roadway, and a bar exhibiting evidence for extensive 19th century and/or early 20th century placer mining. As

presently mapped, trail construction would encounter these resources, resulting in grading that could modify potentially significant contributing elements, or partially or totally eliminate recorded sites and features. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1 below would reduce these effects to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure CR-1: Trail Realignment.** Because of the narrow trail corridor, the realignment of the proposed route will avoid all significant documented cultural resources. Avoidance of cultural resources during construction projects involves the least degree of effort and provides maximum preservation benefits. To minimize the potential effects of erosion and siltation, trail realignment should, whenever feasible, occur downhill from the resource. Topography and proximity of the trail will necessitate moving the proposed route uphill in only one case; the mine adit (and mined bar) at Ponderosa Bridge (NF-9).
  - Realign trail at least 25 feet down-slope from sites NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8 to eliminate direct impacts and reduce the possibility of trail-related erosion and siltation.
  - Realign trail at least 25–50 feet up-slope from the current proposed alignment from the Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet down-river to avoid the historically mined bar and associated features.

#### **IMPACT CR-2: EFFECTS TO UNKNOWN CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The entire trail route has been subjected to an intensive archaeological inventory and the project vicinity is known to contain numerous historic and prehistoric resources. However, buried traces of historic-era activity and early Native American occupation that could not be documented during the course of the surface pedestrian survey may be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2 will reduce this potential effect to a **less-than-significant** level.

- **Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protection of Unknown Cultural Resources.** Cease all ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery of historic or prehistoric cultural materials or human remains. If archaeological materials such as historic building or structure remains, and artifact deposits or scatters, or prehistoric artifacts such as stone tool flaking debitage, mortars, pestles, shell, bone, or human remains should be encountered during trail construction, all ground-disturbing activity in the area must cease. A qualified cultural resource specialist must be contacted to identify the materials, determine their possible significance, and formulate appropriate mitigation measures. Appropriate measures may include no action, avoidance of the resource through trail realignment, subsurface testing, and potentially data recovery.

If human remains are encountered during the course of trail construction, all potential ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery must cease and the Reclamation land manager or his/her representative must be notified. The land

manager will determine if the remains are of recent origin or are associated with early Native American populations. If the remains are found to be of Native American origin, the treatment and ultimate disposition of the remains will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

Because some portions of the trail are on State or private property, if human remains are encountered on State or federal property, all potential ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery must cease and the Placer County Coroner must be contacted. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American in origin, he/she must contact the NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC will contact the Most Likely Descendent (MLD) of the remains and the MLD, in conjunction with Placer County, Reclamation, and the archaeologist, will determine the ultimate disposition of the remains.

## **4.15 RECREATION**

This section describes existing recreation resources and activities within the project area, effects the proposed action may have on recreation, and any required mitigation measures to reduce effects to less than significant.

### **4.15.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

The Auburn SRA was originally designated in 1979 to be managed as a reservoir-based SRA following the completion of the Auburn Dam. Construction of the dam has been delayed indefinitely; therefore the SRA is now managed as a river-based recreation area in the interim. The Auburn SRA IRMP identifies six major recreational use areas including the Highway 49 corridor, Lake Clementine, North Fork of the American River, Middle Fork of the American River, Knickerbocker Flat, and the Rim Areas (Reclamation 1992). The Auburn SRA provides numerous recreational activities on its rivers, lakes, trails, and swimming areas.

The confluence, which is located at the western end of the proposed alignment, is a large beach area where the North and Middle Forks of the American River meet. It receives the second highest visitation in the Auburn SRA and is accessed by Highway 49 and Old Foresthill Road. There are significant daily flow fluctuations in the river caused by dam releases upstream. Swimming, hiking, fishing, and sunbathing are main activities at the confluence. The Western States Trail is a multiple-use trail that traverses the confluence area. The confluence receives most of its use in the summer months; however, the mild climate allows for year-round recreation use (Reclamation 1992).

Lake Clementine, created by a debris-retaining dam in 1935, is roughly 4 miles long and 1/8 mile wide. The lake is located approximately 2 miles upstream and northeast from the confluence area. Lake Clementine is divided into Upper and Lower Lake Clementine. Lower Lake Clementine offers opportunities for boating, waterskiing, and sport fishing, as well as a marina. Upper Lake Clementine provides a seasonal parking area, picnic area, drive-in and

boat-in campsites, as well as passive recreational activities such as canoeing, swimming, and flatwater kayaking. Motorized boats are not permitted in the Upper Lake Clementine because of its shallow depth (Reclamation 1992).

#### **4.15.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

According to the Placer County CEQA Checklist, a project would have a significant effect on recreation if it would:

- increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities, or
- affect existing recreational opportunities.

#### **4.15.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

The proposed action would assist in meeting the existing demand for more recreational opportunities and more trails in the Auburn SRA and in Placer County. The multiple-use trails are desired by a variety of users, including hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. New trails are welcomed by the majority of Auburn SRA visitors. The new trail would not increase the demand for more parks or facilities, nor would it negatively affect existing recreational opportunities. The project would have a **less-than-significant** effect on recreation.

#### **4.16 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The following discussions are provided to satisfy the CEQA requirements for Mandatory Findings of Significance.

1. The proposed action may have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment by generating effects to water quality. The proposed trail alignment is located on steep slopes, which could result in erosion of surface soils. Runoff from the construction of the trail and staging areas could result in effects to the intermittent drainages and the North Fork of the American River. These impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with the implementation of Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Soil Erosion Control Measures.

The proposed action may have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment by generating effects to air quality. Although, according to the General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos, the proposed action would not be located within an area containing asbestos, it is not confirmed that asbestos is not located within the project site (Churchill and Hill 2000). Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Asbestos Site Verification would reduce this effect to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action may reduce the habitat, cause to drop below self-sustaining levels, or reduce or restrict the range of the foothill yellow-legged frog. Construction of the trail across drainages could release sediments in the water and removing rocks from the streambed to build the trail, retaining walls, or stream crossings may physically disturb the egg masses, tadpoles, and adults of the foothill yellow-legged frog. The foothill yellow-legged frog is a federal and California Species of Special Concern. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Protection of Foothill Yellow-legged Frog would reduce this effect to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action may reduce the habitat of, cause to drop below self-sustaining levels, or reduce or restrict raptors or other migratory birds. The removal of trees greater than 6 inches in diameter and other vegetation along the trail could result in the loss of raptor and migratory bird nests. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Protection of Raptors and Other Nesting Birds would reduce the potential effect to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action may threaten to eliminate a plant community or reduce or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant. Construction of the trail could affect populations of special-status plant species by disturbance or removal. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Protection of Special Status Plants would reduce the potential effect to a less than significant level.

The proposed action could have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment by resulting in effects to jurisdictional Waters of the United States. Placement of trail material or bridge footings across 48 drainages would be considered fill of jurisdictional Waters of the United States, which is a violation of the Clean Water Act. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Protection of Jurisdictional Waters of the United States would reduce this effect to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action could have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment by resulting in effects to streambeds. Crossing 48 drainages along the trail alignment could result in alteration or disturbance of the streambeds. Streambeds are considered sensitive by CDFG. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Streambed Alteration Agreement would reduce this effect to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action could have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment by resulting in exposure to hazardous materials. The proposed action would involve some equipment that may require the use of small amounts of hazardous materials. These materials may be released in accidental spills and pose a hazard to people, animal, or plant populations in the area. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HM-1: Storage and Handling of Hazardous Materials would reduce this effect to a less than significant level.

The proposed action may eliminate important examples of major periods of California history. Numerous significant and potentially significant (as per the CRHR/NRHP) cultural resources have been documented within and immediately adjacent to the proposed

trail route. As presently mapped, the trail would subject these resources to adverse impacts ranging from the modification of potentially significant contributing elements, to the total or partial destruction of recorded sites and features. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-1: Trail Realignment would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

The proposed action may eliminate important examples of major periods of California prehistory. Buried traces of historic-era activity and early Native American occupation that could not be documented during the course of the surface pedestrian survey may be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed trail. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protection of Unknown Cultural Resources will reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

2. Construction of the proposed action would result in short-term, temporary effects to water quality, air quality, biological resources, hazardous materials, and cultural resources; however, effects are temporary and the proposed action has incorporated mitigation measures to reduce the potentially significant effects to less-than-significant levels. Therefore, the proposed action would not have effects that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable.
3. The proposed action would not result in environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. All identified potentially significant adverse effects have been reduced to a less-than-significant level because mitigation measures have been incorporated in the proposed action.

## 5 MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter presents the required mitigation measures identified in Chapter 4. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce all impacts of the proposed project to a less-than-significant level.

### WATER QUALITY

- **Mitigation Measure WQ-1: Soil Erosion Control Measures.** Before construction, Placer County would submit a Notice of Intent to the Central Valley RWQCB for coverage under the general construction NPDES permit. To comply with the NPDES, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared to address potential impacts from stormwater runoff during construction. Typical measures included in the requirements of NPDES permits and SWPPPs include revegetation and stabilization after grading by seeding and mulching the disturbed area and implementation of best management practices (i.e., refueling in designated areas, prevention of sediment transport from graded areas, daily inspection of equipment for leaks, and disposal of excavated material away from water sources).

### AIR QUALITY

- **Mitigation Measure AQ-1: Asbestos Site Verification.** Prior to any ground disturbance for the construction of the proposed action, Placer County and the Reclamation shall solicit a field verification of the presence/absence of asbestos on the project site by a qualified representative of the PCAPCD. If asbestos is found on the project site, the appropriate mitigation measures required by PCAPCD shall be adhered to prior to construction.

### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Protection of Foothill Yellow-legged Frog:** The following measures would reduce impacts to foothill yellow-legged frogs to a less than significant level:
  - Construction of the trail across drainages and streams shall occur when the drainages are dry to the extent feasible.
  - Guidelines to protect water quality and prevent erosion, as outlined in the BMPs in the project description and in Mitigation Measure H-2, shall be implemented.
  - If water is present during construction, disturbance to pools and slow runs with cobble-sized substrate will be minimized. In particular, rocks shall not be collected from in-water environments from late March to early September to avoid disturbing foothill yellow-legged frog egg masses and tadpoles.

- **Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Protection of Raptors and Other Nesting Birds.** The following measures would reduce impacts to raptors and other nesting birds to a less than significant level:
  - Limit removal of trees greater than 6 inches dbh to the greatest degree possible. If trees larger than 6 inches dbh must be removed, provide written documentation including the rationale for removal.
  - If removal or larger trees is required, remove tree during the non-breeding season for raptors (September to March) if possible.
  - Before removal of tree during the non-breeding season, a qualified biologist shall inspect the tree for potential raptor nest, which are protected under Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code. If raptor nests are present and cannot be avoided, consult with CDFG regarding appropriate measures for tree removal. If no nests are found, no further mitigation is required.
  - If tree removal is required during the raptor breeding season, a qualified biologist shall conduct surveys for nesting raptors for the affected tree and appropriate buffer zone around the tree to be removed.
  - If nesting raptors are present, establish appropriate buffer zone and avoid construction within the buffer until the end of the breeding season with CDFG regarding alternative appropriate protection measures. The nest tree shall not be removed.
  - Woody vegetation (e.g., small trees and shrubs) shall not be removed during the nesting season for raptors and migratory birds (i.e., March to August) to the extent feasible. If woody vegetation must be removed during the nesting season, the amount and extent to be removed shall be minimized to the extent feasible.
  
- **Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Protection of Special-Status Plants.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts on special-status plant species to a less-than-significant level:
  - Before the initiation of any ground-disturbing or vegetation-clearing activities, Placer County shall retain a qualified botanist to conduct surveys for Red Hills soaproot, Brandegees' clarkia, and Butte County fritillary in the study area. If desired by Placer County, DPR and Reclamation, dubious pea may be included in the target list for the survey.
  - The botanist shall conduct surveys for these special-status plant species in all suitable habitat at the appropriate time of year when the target species would be in flower and therefore clearly identifiable (i.e. blooming period).

- Surveys shall be conducted following the DFG approved protocol for surveying for special-status plant species.
- If no special-status plants are found during focused surveys, the botanist shall document the findings in a letter report to Placer County, and no further mitigation will be required.
- If special-status plants are found, the following measures shall be implemented:
- Information on the special-status plant populations shall be recorded in the field on CNDDDB data form. These forms shall be submitted to the CNDDDB upon completion of the survey.
- If the populations can be avoided, they shall be clearly marked in the field by a qualified botanist for avoidance during trail construction activities.
- If special-status plant populations cannot be avoided, consultations with CDFG and/or USFWS may be required depending on the listing status of the species present. These consultations shall determine appropriate mitigation measures for any populations that would be affected by the implementation of the proposed action. Appropriate measures may include the creation of offsite populations through seed collection or transplanting, preservation and enhancement of existing populations, or restoration or creation of suitable habitat in sufficient quantities to compensate for the impact.
- The project applicant shall implement all mitigation measures determined necessary during this consultation.

■ **Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Protection of Jurisdictional Waters of the United States.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional drainages to a less-than-significant level:

- Before project implementation, Placer County shall retain a qualified wetland ecologist to conduct a delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters of the United States subject to USACE jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act in the study area that may be affected by project implementation and submit the delineation to the USACE for verification. *(Note – a delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and other Waters of the U.S. was conducted by EDAW wetland ecologists in February 2004. It is currently undergoing review by Placer County and will be submitted to the USACE for verification in March 2004)*
- Based on the verified delineation, the project applicant shall attempt to minimize fill of other Waters of the U.S. to the greatest extent feasible.
- For those Waters of the U.S. unavoidable during construction, authorization for fill of wetlands and alteration of waters of the United States shall be secured from

USACE via the Section 404 permitting process prior to project implementation. The project would likely qualify for a Nationwide Permit 14 (Linear Transportation Projects)

- Any mitigation measures determined through the 404 permitting process shall be implemented by the project proponent.
  - The application for a Section 404 permit from the USACE will trigger the need for Clean Water Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
  - Placer County shall submit a Section 401 application package to the RWQCB prior to project implementation.
  - Any mitigation measures determined through the 401 permitting process shall be implemented during project construction.
- **Mitigation Measure BIO-5: Streambed Alteration Agreement.** The following measures are designed to minimize and mitigate impacts to the bed and bank of drainages in the study area and their associated riparian habitat:
- Prior to the initiation of any project-related activity within streambeds, Placer County shall obtain a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG. A 1602 permit would include permit conditions such as a time limit between May 1 and November 15 for completing work with a stream zone, turbidity and siltation minimization techniques, best management practices, and revegetation after disturbance. In order to issue the agreement, CDFG will typically require a mitigation plan.
  - Placer County shall comply with any conditions set forth in the streambed alteration agreement and implement any mitigation measures included in the mitigation plan.
- **Mitigation Measure BIO-6: Prevention of Introduction and Spread of Invasive Weeds.** The following measure would reduce potential impacts resulting from the introduction and spread of invasive weeds to a less-than-significant level:
- Develop a target-list of invasive weeds with potential to occur and be problematic in the study area. This may be done by reviewing the California Invasive Plant Council's (CalIPC's) list of invasive wildland weeds (CalIPC 1999), the California Department of Food and Agriculture's List of Invasive weeds (CDEA 2004), and by consulting knowledgeable individuals such as the BLM's resource ecologist, DPR resource ecologist, and the Placer County agricultural commissioner.
  - Prior to construction, map and record the species and extent of any invasive weed infestations potentially present in the study area. (Note: This may be done as part

of the special-status species plant surveys conducted in the spring of 2004 for this project or during other pre-construction activities along the trail alignment).

- If populations of invasive weeds are documented, eradicate them prior to construction, preferably before they set seed. If eradication is infeasible, clearly identify them by flagging and avoid the flagged area during construction to prevent spread.
- Ensure that any equipment used during construction is free of mud or seed bearing material prior to entering the construction area.
- Ensure that any fill soil, mulch, seeds and straw materials used during construction and implementation of BMPs is weed-free, including certified weed free material if available.
- Once the trail is constructed and open to the public, conduct periodic monitoring (at least once per year during the growing season) to ensure early detection and eradication of any invasive weed species brought in by users. Treat and eradicate any populations as soon as possible after detection, preferably before seeds set.

#### **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

- **Mitigation Measure H-1: Fire Prevention.** Placer County shall implement the following General Fire Prevention Requirements derived from the *Fire Prevention Plan for Industrial, Commercial, and Recreational Operations for the Auburn State Recreation Area* (Appendix C) and as provided by the Fire Captain:

- During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, which is May 1st until the end of declared fire season, no person shall use or operate any motor, engine, boiler, stationary equipment, welding equipment, cutting torches, tarpots, or grinding devices from which a spark, fire, or flame may originate, which is located on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, without doing the following: Maintain one serviceable round point shovel with an overall length of not less than forty-six (46) inches and one backpack pump water-type fire extinguisher fully equipped and ready for use at the immediate area during the operation. (A five gallon pressurized water fire extinguisher is appropriate in lieu of the backpack water pump. This does not apply to portable powersaws, gold suction dredges and other portable tools powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine).
- Each passenger vehicle used on operations shall be equipped with one water fire extinguisher or backpack pump in the amount of three to five gallons. Each tractor used in such operation shall be equipped with one 4ABC fire extinguisher.

- During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, no person shall use or operate or cause to be operated in the area any portable saw, auger, drill, tamper, or other portable tool powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, within 25 feet of any flammable material, without providing and maintaining at the immediate locations of use or operation of the saw or tool, for firefighting purposes one serviceable round point shovel, with an overall length of not less than 46 inches, or one serviceable 3 – 5 gallon pressurized fire extinguisher or 5 gallon back pump. The required fire tools shall at no time be farther from the point of operation of the power saw or tool than 25 feet with unrestricted access for the operator from the point of operation.
  - No person shall use, operate, or allow to be used or operated, any internal combustion engine which uses hydrocarbon fuels on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land unless the engine is equipped with a spark arrester maintained in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire.
  - Spark arresters affixed to the exhaust system of engines or vehicles subject to this section shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material.
  - No person shall use, operate, or cause to be operated on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land any handheld portable, multiposition, internal-combustion engine, which is operated on hydrocarbon fuels, unless it is constructed and equipped and maintained for the prevention of fire.
  - CDF must be contacted per the Fire Prevention Plan (Appendix C) prior to commencement of operations.
  - CDF may require operations to be ceased, based on fire weather conditions, and or resource draw downs.
  - At new trailheads and staging areas, where motor vehicles have access, large boulders or other type vehicle barrier, must be placed 8 feet inside the perimeter of the parking lot. The intent is to keep vehicles away from vegetation so as to keep vehicle fires from spreading into the wildland. The outside buffer between the boulders and vegetation should have gravel or other type vegetation growth inhibitor to restrict vegetation growth.
- **Mitigation Measure H-2: Storage and Handling of Hazardous Materials.** Prior the commencement of project construction, Placer County shall:
- Prepare and implement an accidental spill prevention and response plan for storage and use of hazardous materials. This plan shall identify measures to prevent

accidental spills from leaving the site and methods for responding to and cleaning up spills before neighboring properties are exposed to hazardous materials.

- Ensure that any employee handling hazardous materials is trained in the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials and trained to follow all applicable regulations with regard to such hazardous materials.
- Before construction begins, the construction contractor would be required to identify a staging area where hazardous materials will be stored during construction in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

- **Mitigation Measure CR-1: Trail Realignment.** Because of the narrow trail corridor, the realignment of the proposed route will avoid all significant documented cultural resources. Avoidance of cultural resources during construction projects involves the least degree of effort and provides maximum preservation benefits. To minimize the potential effects of erosion and siltation, trail realignment should, whenever feasible, occur downhill from the resource. Topography and proximity of the trail will necessitate moving the proposed route uphill in only one case; the mine adit (and mined bar) at Ponderosa Bridge (NF-9).
  - Realign trail at least 25 feet down-slope from sites NF-4, NF-5, NF-7, and NF-8 to eliminate direct impacts and reduce the possibility of trail-related erosion and siltation.
  - Realign trail at least 25–50 feet up-slope from the current proposed alignment from the Ponderosa Bridge to approximately 2,000 feet down-river to avoid the historically mined bar and associated features.
- **Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protection of Unknown Cultural Resources.** Cease all ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery of historic or prehistoric cultural materials or human remains. If archaeological materials such as historic building or structure remains, and artifact deposits or scatters, or prehistoric artifacts such as stone tool flaking debitage, mortars, pestles, shell, bone, or human remains should be encountered during trail construction, all ground-disturbing activity in the area must cease. A qualified cultural resource specialist must be contacted to identify the materials, determine their possible significance, and formulate appropriate mitigation measures. Appropriate measures may include no action, avoidance of the resource through trail realignment, subsurface testing, and potentially data recovery.
  - If human remains are encountered during the course of trail construction, all potential ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery must cease and the Reclamation land manager or his/her representative must be notified. The land manager will determine if the remains are of recent origin or are associated with

early Native American populations. If the remains are found to be of Native American origin, the treatment and ultimate disposition of the remains will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

- Because some portions of the trail are on State or private property, if human remains are encountered, all potential ground-disturbing activities in the vicinity of the discovery must cease and the Placer County Coroner must be contacted. If the coroner determines the remains to be Native American in origin, he/she must contact the NAHC within 24 hours. The NAHC will contact the Most Likely Descendent (MLD) of the remains and the MLD, in conjunction with Placer County, Reclamation, and the archaeologist, will determine the ultimate disposition of the remains.

## **6 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **6.1 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

The proposed action has been determined to be in compliance with the following federal and state laws and Executive Orders.

#### **6.1.1 FEDERAL LAWS**

##### **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1970 (PL 91-190, 83 STAT. 852, 42 USC §4341 ET SEQ.)**

The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on an understanding of environmental consequences and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. Regulations implementing NEPA are set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality. This IS/MND and EA serves as the proposed action NEPA compliance.

##### **WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT OF 1968 AS AMENDED (PL 90-542; 16 USC §§1271-1287)**

This act established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, which designated the first Wild and Scenic Rivers. The act requires a comprehensive management plan for designated rivers and contains guidance for their management, particularly with regard to free-flowing condition and Outstandingly Remarkable Values. The North Fork of the American River is not designated as Wild and Scenic within the project area; however it is a designated Wild and Scenic River upstream from the proposed action. Therefore the proposed action is not required to comply with the act.

##### **CLEAN AIR ACT, AS AMENDED (PL CHAPTER 360, 69 STAT. 322, 42 USC §7401 ET SEQ.)**

Section 118 of the Clean Air Act requires all federal facilities to comply with existing federal, state, and local air pollution control laws and regulations. Reclamation will work in conjunction with the Placer County Air Pollution Control District to ensure that all construction activities meet these requirements.

##### **FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT OF 1977 (33 USC 1251 ET SEQ.)**

The Clean Water Act (commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act) provides for the restoration and maintenance of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. Section 404 of the act prohibits the discharge of fill material into navigable water of the United States, including wetlands, except as permitted under separate regulations by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The placement of fill in wetlands should be avoided if there are practicable alternatives. A 404 permit would be obtained from the USACE prior to construction.

### **ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973, AS AMENDED (PL 93-205, 87 STAT. 884, 16 USC §1531 ET SEQ.)**

The Endangered Species Act protects threatened and endangered species, as listed by USFWS, from unauthorized take, and directs federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of such species. Section 7 of the act defines federal agency responsibilities for consultation with the USFWS and requires preparation of a biological assessment to identify any threatened or endangered species that is likely to be affected by the proposed action. Reclamation determined that formal consultation with the USFWS was not necessary for the proposed action because federally listed species would not be affected.

### **MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT**

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulates or prohibits taking, killing, possession of, or harm to migratory bird species listed in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Section 10.13. This act is an international treaty for the conservation and management of bird species that may migrate through more than one country and is enforced in the United States by the USFWS. Hunting of specific migratory game birds is permitted under the regulations listed in Title 50 CFR 20. The act was amended in 1972 to include protection for migratory birds of prey (raptors). Mitigation Measure BIO-2 has been incorporated to reduce effects to migratory birds.

### **PORTER-COLOGNE WATER QUALITY CONTROL ACT (CALIFORNIA WATER CODE, SECTION 13020)**

Under the authority of the Porter-Cologne Act and federal Clean Water Act, Regional Water Quality Control Boards act as regional agencies for the State Water Resources Control Board and are responsible for regional enforcement of water quality laws and coordination of water quality control activities. The regional board for the proposed action area is the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 has been incorporated to ensure compliance with this act.

### **ANTIQUITIES ACT OF 1906 (PL 59-209, 34 STAT. 225, 16 USC §432 AND 43 CFR 3)**

This act provides for the protection of historic or prehistoric remains, “or any antiquity,” on federal lands. It protects historic monuments and ruins on public lands.

### **ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT OF 1979 (PL 96-95, 93 STAT. 712, 16 USC §470AA ET SEQ. AND 43 CFR 7, SUBPARTS A AND B, 36 CFR)**

This act secures the protection of archeological resources on public or Indian lands and fosters increased cooperation and exchange of information between private, government, and the professional community in order to facilitate the enforcement and education of present and future generations. It regulates excavation and collection on public and Indian lands. It requires notification of Indian tribes who may consider a site to have religious or cultural importance prior to issuing a permit. The act was amended in 1988 to require the development of plans for surveying public lands for archeological resources and systems for

reporting incidents of suspected violations. Mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 are incorporated into the proposed action to comply with this act.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966, AS AMENDED (PL 89-665, 80 STAT. 915, 16 USC §470 ET SEQ. AND 36 CFR 18, 60, 61, 63, 68, 79, 800)**

The National Historic Preservation Act requires agencies to take into account the effects of their actions on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has developed implementing regulations (36 CFR 800), which allow agencies to develop agreements for consideration of these historic properties. It is not anticipated that any resources would be eligible for the NRHP.

**NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVE PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT (PL 101-601, 104 STAT. 3049, 25 USC §§3001-3013)**

This act assigns ownership or control of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are excavated or discovered on federal lands or tribal lands to lineal descendants or culturally affiliated Native American groups. Mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 are incorporated into the proposed action to comply with this act.

### **6.1.2 EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

#### **EXECUTIVE ORDER 11593**

**Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment.** This Executive Order instructs all federal agencies to support the preservation of cultural properties. It directs them to identify and nominate cultural properties under their jurisdiction to NRHP and to “exercise caution to assure that any federally owned property that might qualify for nomination is not inadvertently transferred, sold, demolished, or substantially altered.” It is not anticipated that any resources would be eligible for the NRHP and mitigation measures CR-1 and CR-2 ensure compliance with this order for any known or unknown resources.

#### **EXECUTIVE ORDER 11988**

**Floodplain Management.** This Executive Order requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid development in floodplains whenever there is a practical alternative. If a proposed action is found to be in the applicable regulatory floodplain, the agency shall prepare a floodplain assessment, known as a Statement of Findings. This project would not be located within or modify a floodplain, therefore a floodplain assessment and statement of findings is not required.

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 11990**

**Protection of Wetlands.** This Executive Order established the protection of wetlands and riparian systems as the official policy of the federal government. It requires all federal agencies to consider wetland protection as an important part of their policies and take action to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. The proposed action has incorporated Mitigation Measure BIO-3 which would ensure compliance with this order.

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 13112**

**Invasive Species.** This Executive Order prevents the introduction of invasive species and directs federal agencies to not authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species. The proposed action includes measures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

### **6.1.3 STATE LAWS**

#### **CALIFORNIA ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT**

The California Endangered Species Act expanded upon the original plant protection act and enhanced legal protection for plants and wildlife. The California Endangered Species Act parallels the policies of the federal Endangered Species Act. The state legislation was written to protect state endangered and threatened plant and animal species whose continued existence in California is in jeopardy. The California Endangered Species Act and Sections 2050 and 2097 of the Fish and Game Code prohibit “take” of plant and animal species designated by the California Fish and Game Commission as either endangered or threatened. The proposed action has incorporated mitigation measures BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-3 to ensure compliance with the California Endangered Species Act.

#### **CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME CODE**

Sections 3511 (birds), 4700 (mammals), 5050 (reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fish) of the California Fish and Game Code designate certain species as “fully protected.” Fully protected species, or parts thereof, may not be taken or possessed at any time without permission by the California Department of Fish and Game. Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code affords protection to bird nests and birds of prey (orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes). Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code requires a Streambed Alteration Agreement to be granted prior to any action that may affect a river, lake or stream or its adjacent riparian vegetation. Mitigation measures BIO-1, BIO-2, and BIO-5 ensure the proposed action is in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.

#### **CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT PROTECTION ACT**

State listing of plant species began in 1977 with the passage of the Native Plant Protection Act. The act directed the California Department of Fish and Game to carry out the Legislature’s

intent to “preserve, protect, and enhance endangered plants in this state.” The act gave the California Fish and Game Commission the power to designate native plants as endangered or rare, and to require permits for collecting, transporting, or selling such plants. When the California Endangered Species Act was passed, it expanded upon the Native Plant Protection Act and enhanced legal protection for plants. To align with federal regulations, the California Endangered Species Act adopted the categories “threatened” and “endangered” species. It grandfathered all “rare” animals into the act as threatened species, but did not do so for rare plants. Thus, there are three listing categories for plants in California: rare, threatened, and endangered. The proposed action has incorporated BIO-3 to ensure compliance with the California Native Plant Protection Act.

## 6.2 PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED

Christofk, Tom .....	Placer County Air Pollution Control District
Dampier, Jill .....	California State Parks
Davis, Terry .....	Sierra Club
Lopez, Fred.....	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Enos, Rose .....	Independent Representative of the Maidu/Washoe Tribes
Fisher, Andrew .....	Placer County Facility Services Department
Gould, Gordon .....	California Department of Fish and Game
Micheaels, Jim.....	California State Parks
Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)	
Peach, Eric .....	PARC and Sierra Club
Ramirez, John.....	Placer County Parks Administrator
Schroeder, Robert .....	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Singh, Param .....	Placer County Air Pollution Control District
Suehead, Christopher .....	Todd Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation
Suehead, John.....	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
Tavares, Jessica.....	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
Vintze, Dave.....	Placer County Air Pollution Control District
Wells, Greg .....	North Fork Associates
West, Jim.....	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

### **6.3 RECORD OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Trail Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting, January 9, 2003.

TAG Meeting, February 13, 2003.

TAG Meeting, March 13, 2003.

TAG Meeting, April 3, 2003.

TAG Meeting, May 8, 2003.

News Release for Public Scoping Meeting. February 13, 2004.

Public Scoping Meeting, February 19, 2003, Placer County Planning Commission Hearing Room.

## 7 REFERENCES

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## **7.2 PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- California Department of Fish and Game. Sacramento, CA. February 2, 2004 – email to Lisa Clement of EDAW regarding spotted owl records in the project vicinity.
- Dampier, Jill. State Park Superintendent I for Gold Fields District. February 12, 2003 – personal communication with the Trail Advisory Group.
- Dampier, Jill. State Park Superintendent I for Gold Fields District. March 18, 2004 – personal communication with Connie Gallippi of EDAW, regarding usage of confluence area.
- Fisher, Andrew. Project Manager at Placer County Facility Services Department. February 13, 2004 - personal communication with Connie Gallippi of EDAW, about clarifications on the project description.
- Wells, Greg. Trail Coordinator/Resource Specialist. North Fork Associates. January 29, 2004 – personal communication with Petra Unger and Misa Ward of EDAW, regarding frequency of flows in drainages.
- Wells, Greg. Trail Coordinator/Resource Specialist. North Fork Associates. January 29, 2004 – personal communication with Connie Gallippi of EDAW, regarding construction timeframes.

## 8 REPORT PREPARATION

### PLACER COUNTY FACILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

John Ramirez..... Parks Administrator  
Andy Fisher..... Project Manager  
Greg Wells ..... Consultant, North Fork Associates, Trail Coordinator

### BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Rob Shroeder.....Project Coordinator  
Jim West..... Regional Archaeologist  
Sandi Richerson..... Wildlife Biologist

### CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Jim Michaels ..... Staff Park and Recreation Specialist  
Jill Dampier ..... Park Superintendent I, Gold Fields District

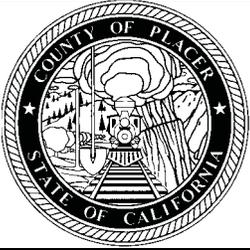
### EDAW

Curtis Alling, AICP..... Principal-in-Charge  
Debra Bishop..... Project Manager  
Connie Gallippi ..... Natural Resource Planner  
Brian Ludwig, PhD. .... Senior Archaeologist  
Richard Deis ..... Senior Archaeologist  
Petra Unger ..... Senior Botanist  
Misa Ward..... Botanist  
Linda Leeman ..... Wildlife Biologist  
Honey Walters..... Air Quality Specialist  
Lorrie Jo Williams ..... Graphic Artist  
Gayiety Hasbrouck ..... Word Processor  
Amber Martin ..... Word Processor  
Joan McHale..... Word Processor

APPENDIX A

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PLACER COUNTY CEQA INITIAL STUDY  
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST



## PLACER COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

11414 B Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603 (530) 886-3000/FAX (530) 886-3080

### *INITIAL STUDY*

*In accordance with the policies of the Placer County Board of Supervisors regarding implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, this document constitutes the Initial Study on the proposed project. This Initial Study provides the basis for the determination whether the project may have a significant effect on the environment. If it is determined that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report will be prepared which focuses on the areas of concern identified by this Initial Study.*

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** North Fork American River Trail

**Environmental Setting:** Please see Chapter 4.0 of the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment for a detailed description.

**Project Description:** Please see Chapter 3.0 for a detailed description.

#### **II. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

- A. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers.
- B. "Less than Significant Impact" applies where the project's impacts are negligible and do not require any mitigation to reduce impacts.
- C. "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less than Significant Impact." The County, as lead agency, must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from Section IV, EARLIER ANALYSES, may be cross-referenced).
- D. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- E. All answers must take account of the entire action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts [CEQA, Section 15063 (a) (1)].
- F. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration [Section 15063(c)(3)(D)]. Earlier analyses are discussed in Section IV at the end of the checklist.
- G. References to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans/community plans, zoning ordinances) should be incorporated into the checklist. Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should include a reference to the pages or chapters where the statement is substantiated. A source list should be attached, and other sources used, or individuals contacted, should be cited in the discussion.

<b>Environmental Issues</b> <i>(See attachments for information sources)</i>	No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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<b>1. LAND USE PLANNING. Would the proposal:</b>				
a. Conflict with general plan/community plan/specific plan designation(s) or zoning, or policies contained within such plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by responsible agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Be incompatible with existing land uses in the vicinity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Affect agricultural and timber resources or operations (e.g., impacts to soils or farmlands and timber harvest plans, or impacts from incompatible land uses)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Result in a substantial alteration of the present or planned land use of an area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>2. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the proposal:</b>				
a. Cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g., through projects in an undeveloped area or extension of major infrastructure)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>3. GEOLOGIC PROBLEMS. Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving:</b>				
a. Unstable earth conditions or changes in geologic substructures?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Significant disruptions, displacements, compaction or overcrowding of the soil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Substantial change in topography or ground surface relief features?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. The destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Environmental Issues</b> <i>(See attachments for information sources)</i>	No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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e. Any significant increase in wind or water erosion of soils, either on or off the site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Changes in deposition or erosion or changes in siltation which may modify the channel of a river, stream, or lake?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Exposure of people or property to geologic and geomorphological (i.e. avalanches) hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, mudslides, ground failure, or similar hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>4. WATER. Would the proposal result in:</b>				
a. Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Discharge into surface waters or other alterations of surface water quality (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Change in the quantity of groundwater, either through direct additions of withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations, or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Impacts to groundwater quality?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Impacts to the watershed of important surface water resources, including but not limited to, Lake Tahoe, Folsom Lake, Hell Hole Reservoir, Rock Creek Reservoir, Sugar Pine Reservoir, French Meadows Reservoir, Combie Lake, and Rollins Lake?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Environmental Issues</b> <i>(See attachments for information sources)</i>	No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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<b>5. AIR QUALITY. Would the proposal:</b>				
a. Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Expose sensitive receptors to pollutants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Have the potential to increase localized carbon monoxide levels at nearby intersections in exceedance of adopted standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Create objectionable odors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>6. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION. Would the proposal result in:</b>				
a. Increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Hazards to safety from design features (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Insufficient parking capacity on-site or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Rail, waterborne, or air traffic impacts?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>7. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the proposal result in impacts to:</b>				
a. Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including, but no limited to plants, fish, insects, animals, and birds)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Locally occurring natural communities (e.g., oak woodlands, mixed conifer, annual grasslands, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Significant ecological resources including:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Wetland areas including vernal pools;				
2) Stream environment zones;				
3) Critical deer winter ranges (winter and summer), migratory routes and fawning habitat;				
4) Large areas of non-fragmented natural habitat, including but not limited to Blue Oak Woodlands, Valley Foothill Riparian, vernal pool habitat;				
5) Identifiable wildlife movement zones, including but not limited to, non-fragmented stream environment zones, avian and mammalian routes, and known concentration areas of waterfowl within the Pacific Flyway;				
6) Important spawning areas for anadromous fish?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Environmental Issues</b> (See attachments for information sources)	No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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<b>8. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES.</b> Would the proposal:				
a. Conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and state residents?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>9. HAZARDS.</b> Would the proposal involve:				
a. A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass, or trees?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>10. NOISE.</b> Would the proposal result in:				
a. Increases in existing noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Exposure of people to noise levels in excess of County standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>11. PUBLIC SERVICES.</b> Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in need for new or altered government services, in any of the following areas:				
a. Fire Protection?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Sheriff Protection?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Schools?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other governmental services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Environmental Issues***(See attachments for information sources)*

No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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**12. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS.** Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:

- |  |                                     |                          |                          |                          |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Power or natural gas?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Communication systems?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Sewer, septic systems, or wastewater treatment and disposal facilities? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Storm water drainage?   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Solid waste materials recovery or disposal?                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Local or regional water supplies?                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**13. AESTHETICS.** Would the proposal:

- |   |                                     |                                     |                          |                          |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Create adverse light or glare effects?         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**14. CULTURAL RESOURCES.** Would the proposal:

- |   |                          |                                     |                                     |                          |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Disturb paleontological resources?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Disturb archaeological resources?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Affect historical resources?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Have the potential to cause a physical change, which would affect unique ethnic cultural values? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**15. RECREATION.** Would the proposal:

- |   |                          |                                     |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Affect existing recreational opportunities?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Environmental Issues (See attachments for information sources)	No Impact	Less Than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Potentially Significant Impact
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**III. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

A. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**IV. EARLIER ANALYSIS**

Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, one or more effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration [State CEQA guidelines Section 15063(c)(3)(D)]. In this case a discussion should identify the following on attached sheets.

- A. **Earlier analyses used.** Identify earlier analyses and state where they are available for review.
- B. **Impacts adequately addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of, and adequately analyzed in, an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards. Also, state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
- C. **Mitigation measures.** For effects that are checked as "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087.

Reference: Public Resources Code Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 31083.3, 21093, 21094, 21151; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino*, 202 Cal. App. 3d 296 (1988); *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors*, 222 Cal. App. 3d 1337 (1990).

**V. OTHER RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Department of Fish and Game	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)
<input type="checkbox"/> California Department of Transportation (e.g. Caltrans)	<input type="checkbox"/> California Department of Health Services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Regional Water Quality Control Board	<input type="checkbox"/> California Integrated Waste Management Board
<input type="checkbox"/> California Department of Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/> Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army Corp of Engineers	<input type="checkbox"/> California Department of Toxic Substances
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> California Department of Parks and Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> National Marine Fisheries Service	

**VI. DETERMINATION (to be completed by the Lead Agency)**

- A. I find that the proposed project is categorically exempt (Class \_\_\_\_ ) from the provisions of CEQA.
- B. I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- C. I find that although the proposed project **COULD** have a significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measures described herein have been added to the project. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- D. I find that the proposed project is within the scope of impacts addressed in an previously adopted Negative Declaration, and that only minor technical changes and/or additions are necessary to ensure its adequacy for the project. An **ADDENDUM TO THE PREVIOUSLY-ADOPTED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- E. I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required (i.e. Project, Program, or Master EIR).
- F. I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect(s) on the environment, and at least one effect has not been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards. Potentially significant impacts and mitigation measures that have been adequately addressed in an earlier document are described on attached sheets (see Section IV above). An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** will be prepared to address those effect(s) that remain outstanding (i.e. focused, subsequent, or supplemental EIR).
- G. I find that the proposed project is within the scope of impacts addressed in a previously certified EIR, and that some changes and/or additions are necessary, but none of the conditions requiring a Subsequent or Supplemental EIR exist. An **ADDENDUM TO THE PREVIOUSLY-CERTIFIED EIR** will be prepared.
- H. I find that the proposed project is within the scope of impacts addressed in a previously-certified Program EIR, and that no new effects will occur nor new mitigation measures are required. Potentially significant impacts and mitigation measures that have been adequately addressed in an earlier document are described on attached sheets, including applicable mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project (see Section IV above). **NO FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT** will be prepared [see CEQA Guidelines, Section 15168(c)(2)], 15180, 15181, 15182, 15183.
- I. Other

**VII. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (Persons/Departments Consulted):**

Facility Services Department  
Parks and Grounds Division

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Andy Fisher, Project Manager

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

APPENDIX B

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## AIR QUALITY MODELING



**FIRE PREVENTION PLAN FOR INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND  
RECREATIONAL OPERATIONS FOR THE AUBURN STATE  
RECREATION AREA**

FIRE PREVENTION PLAN  
for INDUSTRIAL , COMMERCIAL and RECREATIONAL OPERATIONS  
for THE AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA

By  
Fred Lopez  
Fire Captain  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit



A guide on behalf of the United States Bureau of Reclamation

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## **PURPOSE / INTRODUCTION**

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) contracts with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) for fire protection and fire prevention services within the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA )or Reclamation lands. It is CDF's contracted responsibility to identify fire mitigation measures of various activities within the ASRA. CDF's goal is to reduce fire starts and reduce the impacts of fire by implementing fire prevention measures on all activities, including industrial and commercial operations within the ASRA.

This plan provides the minimum fire prevention standards to conduct industrial, commercial and recreational operations on the Federal lands within the ASRA. This plan establishes a project review component, which proactively identifies fire hazards early, thus reducing the potential for wildfires.

Many of the fire prevention requirements in this document refer to sections of the Public Resources Code, which apply to private forest, brush and grass covered lands. Federal Regulations are cited and used as a guide in the development of this document as well. This document will be used by Reclamation, California State Parks (CSP), and contractors.

## **PROJECT REVIEW**

The intent is to be proactive in reducing the potential for fire starts resulting from recreation, commercial and industrial operations in the ASRA. Fires that start as a result of these activities have a high risk of becoming large and damaging fires. Therefore, it is imperative that project proposals, within the ASRA, be reviewed by CDF during the planning process and, during project implementation. The review process allows CDF to identify fire hazards and make recommendations or establish requirements in order reduce fire risk. Recommendations or requirements will be made by CDF to the regulatory agencies, Reclamation and State Parks, for incorporation into a project proposal.

## **INSPECTIONS**

All equipment and facilities within a project area will be subject to fire prevention inspection by CDF. Appropriate inspections will be conducted, prior to and during project implementation.

A. All equipment will be inspected to meet fire prevention standards. Prior to the introduction of a piece of equipment that has not been operated in the area, at least 24 hours notice prior to equipment operation will be provided to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Auburn headquarters to the personnel

listed in the Contact section of this document. Minimum standards must always be met.

## **FIRE REPORTING**

All fires within the ASRA shall be reported immediately upon detection via the 911 emergency system, weather extinguished or not. All fires will be investigated and overhauled by CDF.

## **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION CONTACT INFORMATION**

Relating to matters of fire prevention on Federal lands in the ASRA, contact the Auburn Dam Project Patrol Officer (P2323) within the Fire Prevention Bureau at Auburn CDF headquarters in Auburn or the local battalion chief (B2311) for the area at:

CDF&FP

13760 Lincoln Way

Auburn, Ca 95603

530-889-0111 ext 123 or 111 respectively.

If not able to contact the above, the receptionist at 530-889-4904 will receive the information.

## **GENERAL FIRE PREVENTION REQUIREMENTS**

A Minimum Fire Safety Standards Related to Defensible Space.

- (a) This section applies to the construction of structures and access requirements on Federal lands within the ASRA. The requirements are displayed in **Attachment 1** of this document, which address the following:
  - (1) Road standards for fire equipment access.
  - (2) Standards for signs, identifying streets, roads, and buildings.
  - (3) Minimum water supply reserves for emergency fire use.

B. Attachment 2 displays these requirements graphically.

- (a) Maintain around and adjacent to any such building or structure additional fire protection or firebreak made by removing all brush, flammable vegetation, or combustible growth which is located from 30 feet to 100 feet from such building or structure or to the property line, whichever is nearer, as may be required by the director if he/ she finds that, because of extra hazardous

conditions, a firebreak of only 30 feet around such building or structure is not sufficient to provide reasonable fire safety. Grass and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from such building or structure and less than 18 inches in height above the ground may be maintained where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. *Each facility will be inspected by a CDF representative and recommendations will be made regarding vegetation clearances.*

- (b) Remove that portion of any tree, which extends within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.
- (c) Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging any building free of dead or dying wood.
- (d) Maintain the roof of any structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth.
- (e) Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to any fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than one-half inch in size.

*See Attachment 2, examples.*

C. Tools Required for Welding/Cutting/Grinding.

The following is required: During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, which is May 1<sup>st</sup> until the end of declared fire season, no person shall use or operate any motor, engine, boiler, stationary equipment, welding equipment, cutting torches, tarpots, or grinding devices from which a spark, fire, or flame may originate, which is located on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, without doing both of the following:

- (a) First clearing away all flammable material, including snags, from the area around such operation for a distance of 25 feet.
- b) Maintain one serviceable round point shovel with an overall length of not less than forty-six (46) inches and one backpack pump water-type fire extinguisher fully equipped and ready for use at the immediate area during the operation. *A five gallon pressurized water fire extinguisher is appropriate in lieu of the backpack water pump.*

*This section does not apply to portable powersaws, gold suction dredges and other portable tools powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine.*

D. Vehicles and Water Storage for Suppression on Industrial Operations

- (a) Each passenger vehicle, used on operations shall be equipped with one water fire extinguisher or backpack pump in the amount of three to five gallons. Each tractor used in such operation shall be equipped with one 4ABC fire extinguisher. (d) As used in this section: (1) "Vehicle" means a device by which any person or property may be propelled, moved, or drawn over any land surface, excepting a device moved by human power or used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks. (2) "Passenger vehicle" means a vehicle which is self-propelled and which is designed for carrying not more than 10 persons including the driver, and which is used or maintained for the transportation of persons, but does not include any motortruck or truck tractor.
- (b) Certain projects *may be* required to have an on site 300 gallon (minimum) portable water tank (full) with operable pump and 500 feet of 1.5 inch single jacket hose and nozzle be present. All personnel on site must be trained in the operation and mobilization of the tank and pump. This equipment will be used for the suppression of fires at the project site.

E. Gasoline Powersaw and Powertool Requirments

During any time of the year when burning permits are required in an area pursuant to this article, no person shall use or operate or cause to be operated in the area any portable saw, auger, drill, tamper, or other portable tool powered by a gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine on or near any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land, within 25 feet of any flammable material, without providing and maintaining at the immediate locations of use or operation of the saw or tool, for firefighting purposes one serviceable round point shovel, with an overall length of not less than 46 inches, or one serviceable 3 ñ 5 gallon pressurized fire extinguisher or 5 gallon back pump. The required fire tools shall at no time be farther from the point of operation of the power saw or tool than 25 feet with unrestricted access for the operator from the point of operation.

F. Spark Arresters or Fire Prevention Measure, Requirements, Exemptions.

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, no person shall use, operate, or allow to be used or operated, any internal combustion engine which uses hydrocarbon fuels on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land unless the engine is equipped with a spark

arrester, as defined in subdivision (c), maintained in effective working order or the engine is constructed, equipped, and maintained for the prevention of fire.

- (b) Spark arresters affixed to the exhaust system of engines or vehicles subject to this section shall not be placed or mounted in such a manner as to allow flames or heat from the exhaust system to ignite any flammable material.
- (c) A spark arrester is a device constructed of nonflammable materials specifically for the purpose of removing and retaining carbon and other flammable particles over 0.0232 of an inch in size from the exhaust flow of an internal combustion engine that uses hydrocarbon fuels or which is qualified and rated by the United States Forest Service.
- (d) Engines used to provide motive power for trucks, truck tractors, buses, and passenger vehicles, except motorcycles, are not subject to this section if the exhaust system is equipped with a muffler as defined in the Vehicle Code.
- (e) Turbocharged engines are not subject to this section if all exhausted gases pass through the rotating turbine wheel, there is no exhaust bypass to the atmosphere, and the turbocharger is in effective mechanical condition.

G. Portable Powersaws,

No person shall use, operate, or cause to be operated on any forest-covered land, brush-covered land, or grass-covered land any handheld portable, multiposition, internal-combustion engine, which is operated on hydrocarbon fuels, unless it is constructed and equipped and maintained for the prevention of fire.

H. Explosives

All local codes pertaining to the storage of explosives, and safety plans addressing explosive storage shall be adhered to. There is a minimum vegetation clearance of 50' from the storage unit in all direction, and depending on slope and proximity of the storage unit on the slope, up to 150' of vegetation clearance may be required. Consult the appropriate CDF representative regarding storage site selection.

I. Power Lines

Any power pole that supports a switch, fuse, transformer, lightning arrester, line junction or dead end or corner pole must have a vegetative clearance, to

bare mineral soil, 10 feet in each direction from the outer circumference of such pole or tower. Communication lines do not apply.

Vegetative clearances for the respective distances, which are for all directions between all vegetation and all conductors, which are carrying electric current:

- (a) For any line which is operating at 2,400 or more volts, but less than 72,000 volts, four feet.
- (b) For any line which is operating at 72,000 or more volts, but less than 110,000 volts, six feet.
- (c) For any line which is operating at 110,000 or more volts, 10 feet.

Dead trees, old decadent or rotten trees, trees weakened by decay or disease and trees or portions thereof that are leaning toward the line which may contact the line from the side or may fall on the line shall be felled, cut, or trimmed so as to remove such hazard.

These vegetative clearance distances are the minimum required and may be allowed or required to be greater. Consult CDF for support information. The Pacific Gas and Electric Company is a valuable resource to consult for power line clearance expertise and information.